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THURSDAY, JANUARY 9TH, 2014

# Coastline is battered as the storms go on and on!

**PEOPLE** living along the coastal areas of Bridgend county borough and the Vale witnessed giant waves as winds and high tides combined to batter the shoreline.

The worst of the weather was on Friday, January 3. With hundreds of flood alerts across the country, waves swept over sea walls in Porthcawl, Barry and Llantwit Major.

In Porthcawl, the waves even crept up local streets. Windsor Road was closed and a section of the sea road was also sealed off as rocks and pebbles littered the road.

Sandbags were distributed and the situation was monitored for several days. One local resident told The GEM that he wanted to praise council workers who had been keeping on top of the situation.

Further down the coast, extensive repairs are likely to be necessary on the coastal path, where it runs alongside the Royal Porthcawl Golf Club, as large stretches are currently buried under pebbles.

Bridgend County Borough Council

sent workmen to Newton Beach on the Saturday, where they deposited hundreds of tons of rock to shore up the sea defences.

The storms meant that Porthcawl's harbour light featured in many news reports, dwarfed by the high waves – as it has done for several years now.

High tide on the Friday arrived just as daylight was breaking and even that early, photographers were out in force looking for a dramatic image.

In Llantwit Major on Friday, January 3, the Fire Brigade had to rescue a woman trapped by floodwaters in a caravan.

At Cold Knap, Barry, the sea began filling up the former Knap swimming pool site. Waves topped 30 feet in height.

People were warned to stay away from promenades and the exposed shoreline.

At various times, restrictions were placed on access to Penarth Esplanade, Llantwit Major beach, and Southerndown beach. Penarth Pier was closed for public safety.

For photographs of the storms, and the aftermath, see pages 4 and 8.



Porthcawl residents were surprised to see waves getting so close this part of the promenade!

**PHOTO BY**  
**GLYN**  
**EVANS**  
(See more  
storm  
pictures  
on pages  
4 and 8).



**Spring  
Wedding  
Fayres 2014**



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2014 at the  
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## PORTHCAWL PUPILS IN CHARITY WALK FOR THE PHILIPPINES

**RIGHT:**  
George  
Neeson  
(left) and  
Jack  
Williams  
are  
pictured  
on their  
charity  
walk.



**TWO** local boys were moved by the plight of people who had lost their homes in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan struck in December.

They were so concerned about what had happened, especially with Christmas coming, that they decided they wanted to do something to support the relief effort.

With no help from any organisation, they decided to walk from the Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl to Bridgend, finishing at the Roman Catholic church on Ewenny Road, Bridgend.

Jack Williams (aged 12) whose mother is from the Philippines, and his best friend, 13-year-old George Neeson, who both attend Porthcawl Comprehensive School, had never done anything like this before and they set about looking for sponsors for their walk.

(CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 10)

## Caerau burglary: POLICE APPEAL

**POLICE** in Bridgend are appealing for information, following a burglary at a house on Victoria Street, Caerau, Maesteg on Sunday, January 5.

The stolen property includes a white condensing tumble dryer, a silver coloured microwave oven, a Bosch electric drill, a Russell Hobbs steam iron, a white Sky television box, a ten feet by six feet brown and beige square patterned rug, a green cordless telephone and cradle, a small portable halogen heater, a portable convector heater and a pendulum clock.

Of particular value to the owner are a distinctive lamp – described as a square box made up of stained glass

and featuring the names 'Idris & Glenys or Glen', with '70 years anniversary' also on it; a set of four Second World War medals on a strip of material and secured with a large pin; and a Spanish-style ornamental cross bow.

Detective Constable Rebecca Merchant of Bridgend CID said: "This is a very unusual crime, with a large amount of property stolen. The victim is particularly distressed at the loss of the lamp, medals and ornamental crossbow, which belonged to the victim's late parents."

Contact Bridgend CID on 101, or free and anonymously via Crime stoppers, on 0800 555111 (quote reference 62140004512).

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## READERS' LETTERS

### Regeneration a disappointment

**O**NCE again, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has come off second best in its half-hearted attempt to regenerate Porthcawl.

So it looks as though regeneration is in the distant future, considering that it has been on the agenda for over 50 years.

It must be time to remove the dredged material from the harbour that has been dumped at Salt Lake

car park and clean up the area.

Also, it must be time to remove the dangerous structure that takes up a prime position on the eastern promenade, and has been cordoned off for a number of years.

So often we have heard the excuse of it's not worth doing anything because it's part of regeneration.

That excuse has been played out a long time ago. Come on BCBC, get your act together. J Clatworthy, Porthcawl.

### 'Welsh language is our identity'

**I**AM sick and tired of some people in Wales who constantly complain about the Welsh language being used in road signs, supermarkets and shops (GEM letters, December 19).

They complain about the cost, of being unable to pronounce street names and road signs etc.

We travelled through France/Brittany last year. All the signs were in French. So were the supermarket signs. Did

we have a problem? None whatsoever. The year before, it was Spain, all the signs were in Spanish – and there was no difficulty at all!

Which proves that a little bit of effort with pronunciation and learning a little of a language produces positive results.

The doubters in Wales need to get a life and live in the real world.

*Welsh is the oldest living language in Europe. If we lose the language, we lose our identity.*  
A Jones, Coychurch.

### 'Keep the cameras out of the theatre'

**R**ECENTLY, we took our grand-daughter to St David's Hall, Cardiff, to see the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* – and what a joy it was – not just because of the superb performance but because it was NOT constantly interrupted by people taking photographs on their mobile phones, which is very often the case in live theatre performances.

As head of drama in a local comprehensive school, I was responsible for the running of the annual school production.

There was always a large notice posted around the hall, and a full page in the programme pointing out that it was a live performance by young inexperienced actors who could be easily distracted.

We added that the crew had worked very hard to get the lighting effects just right and the other people in the audience wanted to watch and enjoy the perform-

ance and that taking photographs, especially with flash, was quite simply not allowed.

If anybody was rude enough to ignore the notice, they would be discreetly and quietly told that if they persisted they would be asked to leave.

I suspect the the absence of flashes going off might well have been partly down to the nature of the audience that ballet attracted.

I daresay that, in an auditorium seating perhaps 2,000 people it is rather more difficult, but I do think that in an age when there are notices on trains telling people how to behave (not to swear or consume alcohol, put feet on seats etc) theatres could use similar notices to make it much clearer that playing about with a mobile phone and taking photographs in a theatre is downright rude.

It is distracting to the performers, and spoils the enjoyment of the performance for the rest of the audience.

David Alexander

## Celebration time as... JOB SEEKERS RECEIVE AWARD



Amy Abbott, Achiever of the year.



Learner of the Year Kerry Lloyd.

**THE** achievements of local job seekers who have been improving their employment prospects thanks to Bridgend County Borough Council's COAST project, have been celebrated at a special awards evening.

Suitable for people who are out of work due to serious illness, disability or social disadvantages, the COAST project provides a range of support, ranging from advice on writing job applications, CVs and interview skills to vocational training, work placements and voluntary opportunities.

The Creating Opportunities and Skills Team project also offers support and guidance to local employers in order to raise awareness of illness and disability issues.

The outstanding achievements of this year's participants on the project were recognised at the awards evening, held in the ARC building in Bridgend. Among the award winners were Amy Abbott, Achiever of the Year; Kerry Lloyd, Learner of the Year; Karina Edwards, Trainee of the Year; Ian Lawrie, Achievement of the Year; while the overall prize for Participant of the Year went to Anthony Crocombe.

BCBC Leader Mel Nott, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity to reward everyone involved in the COAST



Above, Ian Lawrie (right) who won the Achievement of the Year award, is congratulated by Coun Mel Nott.



Anthony Crocombe, Participant of the year.



Trainee of the year, Karina Edwards.

project for their determination, hard work and talent. The ultimate aim of the initiative is to help people develop skills so that they can find jobs, and it is particularly pleasing to hear that the project is exceeding its initial targets and has so far helped 53 local people to find full time employment.

"It was wonderful to hear some of the individual success stories from the past year, and see how the COAST project is making a difference to local people's lives. Projects like this provide a wide range of opportunities and help to increase the employability of all people across Bridgend county borough."

Awards were also presented at the celebration evening by the



Employment liaison officer Mark Lyddon discussing the project.

Mayor of Bridgend county borough, Coun Clive James, while Coun Lyn Morgan, cabinet member for wellbeing, handed out certificates of achievement to the participants on work related projects.

Following the awards, there was an opportunity for everyone to browse Christmas table displays that had been made by participants at B Leaf, as well as hand-made cards that had been produced as part of the Cwm Calon card project. There were weaving demonstrations during the course of the event, as well.

The evening closed with music from 'The Shed Heads', a band formed by the Welsh Centre for Action on Dependency and Addiction.

## New scheme shows how the arts can benefit people who have dementia

**RIGHT:** Classical music group 'Triptych' and reminiscence artist Katrina Kirkwood are helping local people with dementia to relive their favourite songs.



**A** NEW scheme, 'Being Creatively Active', co-ordinated by BCBC's arts and community development team, highlights the benefits people with dementia can experience through engaging with the arts.

A spokesperson explained that it is funded by the Arts Council of Wales and delivered through the council's ArtsConnect partnership with the local authority arts services in Merthyr Tydfil, the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The project brings classical music group 'Triptych' and reminiscence artist Katrina Kirkwood, together with local people with dementia to help them remember and enjoy the songs and arias of their youth.

At workshops in Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend, family members bring along photographs to help stimulate participants' memories, as they relive their favourite songs from the rugby terraces, melodies of chapel choirs and other music of years gone by.

Coun Lyn Morgan, cabinet member for wellbeing, commented: "It's fantastic that, through the ArtsConnect partnership, our Arts and Community

**Players' panto**  
Bridgend Castle Players are presenting 'Jack and the Beanstalk (another original yet traditional pantomime by George A Smith) at Bettws Social Club this Saturday, January 11. Matinee 2pm; evening show 7pm.

It's also curtain up at Aberkenfig Conservative Club, on Sunday (January 12) for an afternoon show only at 4.30pm.

Tickets, adults £5; child/concession £3.50; family ticket £12

Development team is using the arts to help some of the most vulnerable people in the county borough.

"Music is understood to help people with dementia to unlock fond memories, which can be really comforting for them and their families."

During the February half-term, the programme is also set to help the county bor-

ough's vulnerable youngsters, as Geese Theatre Company will run a week-long drama 'boot camp' for looked-after children, which aims to help the youngsters to find their voices and benefit from interacting with each other.

Their work will also be presented at a special awards celebration at the Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl.

## Parkinson's nurse tells of her trip to work in Tanzania

**AT** the last meeting of the Porthcawl Parkinson's Support Group (PPSG) our local specialist nurse, Louise Ebenezer, told us about her trip to Tanzania to help set up the first-ever course for Parkinson's nurses in East Africa.

One of the things that they did when they arrived in Tanzania was to travel around the rural areas visiting people with the illness.

Most villages do not have running water, and many sufferers will not have seen a doctor, let alone visited a hospital.

They have to pay for

their own medication, often helped by their own extended families. With further courses being planned, better care can be brought to the Parkinson's sufferers in Africa.

This made us realise how lucky we are here in south Wales with the help we receive.

The group celebrated Christmas with lunch at the Grove Golf Club.

The next meeting will be held at 10.45am, Friday, January 31, in the Unitarian Chapel schoolroom, Nottage.

For further information, contact 01656 783071. NC

## HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL JANUARY 16)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary.

For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 - 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
09 Thur			12.29	8.4
10 Fri	00.56	8.0	13.33	7.9
11 Sat	02.12	7.8	14.49	7.9
12 Sun	03.31	8.0	15.55	8.1
13 Mon	04.21	8.3	16.47	8.5
14 Tues	05.14	8.8	17.35	8.8
15 Wed	05.55	9.1	18.14	9.2
16 Thur	06.26	9.3	18.52	9.3

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.



# 'Bus cuts could mean end of Welsh medium schools' – A REGIONAL AM CLAIMS

A REGIONAL AM has warned that proposed cuts to school buses could "spell the end of Welsh medium schools".

The council is currently consulting on a series of proposals to save money on school bus provision, which Tory AM, Byron Davies, says could affect children attending Welsh medium and faith schools in the borough.

Mr Davies, Shadow Welsh transport minister, said: "I oppose anything which will increase the number of cars on the roads when pupils are going to school and coming home."

"There is already huge congestion outside all schools but many children attending their local primaries live within walking distance. "However, nearly all the pupils attending

the Welsh medium and faith schools live outside the statutory limits, so come to school by bus.

"If those buses were removed because of some ridiculous argument that pupils could attend their nearest 'suitable' school instead, hundreds of children would have to be taken to school by car – and that's assuming that parents have a car and are able to make the trip to and from school.

"In my view, trying to say that Welsh medium children can attend English medium schools is a nonsense and a complete non-starter. What would happen to our English medium primaries and comprehensives if there was a sudden influx of children who have not been taught through the medium of English and only know what things are called in Welsh?

"It would also spell the end of Welsh medium schools. Parents simply would not send children to schools miles away if no transport was laid on.

"How could pupils attend the Welsh comprehensive school at Llangynwyd if they live in Pencoed or Porthcawl, and have no car? It would be impossible."

The Tory AM added that the same argument applied to faith schools.

"If the council said that those pupils could just go to their nearest school, I would argue very strongly that those schools were not suitable alternatives.

"There is a strong religious element in lessons in the Roman Catholic schools and parents have the right to make that choice otherwise they could argue that their human rights were being affected."

## League of Friends' gifts for Maesteg hospital patients



**PATIENTS** spending the Christmas holidays in Maesteg Hospital were delighted to receive gifts from the Maesteg Hospital League of Friends.

The League was formed in 1963, and ever since they have presented gifts to the patients. It has raised almost £300,000 over the years, and will be holding the usual summer fete and concert this year to raise much-

needed funds for equipment for the hospital.

The fete will take place on June 18 in the Celtic Club, Garth, Maesteg. If anyone would like a stall, contact Tania Rayner at the hospital on 01656 754221.

Pictured are John Thomas (chair), Lynda Williams (secretary) and Webb, together with Sister Sue Evans (in the antlers!).

## HOSPITAL'S AIM FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS

ELDERLY patients taken to Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend with broken hips after a fall, now have a better chance than ever of going on to make a full recovery, an ABM Health Board spokesman said this week.

"Changes have been made to the way they are cared for, which has seen a dramatic improvement in outcomes in the space of just one year.

"Because the patients involved are almost exclusively old and frail, they are more likely to suffer a fractured neck of femur (broken hip) following a fall, than someone younger and fitter."

Historically, elderly patients suffering this trauma had been at significant risk of complications and some die as a result. Over the past 30 years, outcomes had generally improved in this group.

He said that, even allowing for this, the mortality rate at Princess of Wales Hospital was higher than ABMU would wish, being above both the Welsh average and the rate for Morriston Hospital.

This came to light last year as a result of increased monitoring of hospital mortality data, and greater focus on, the management of broken hips nationally.

ABMU trauma and orthopaedic

consultant, Dougie Russell, explained: "The mortality rate at Bridgend was picked up in a performance review and we made a number of changes to improve it.

"These changes included getting patients to theatre more quickly and having greater input by senior specialist clinicians, which is extremely important.

"We have also put nurse practitioners on the wards, something which has been successful in Morriston, and that has made a big difference. All these things have come together and have led to significant improvements."

The action at Princess of Wales had begun in late 2012 and had already seen its mortality rate reduce to the same as that in Morriston Hospital. As a result, the rate across ABMU is now around 4.5 per cent – half the UK average.

Mr Russell said: "Once the problem was identified we did something about it and now the rates have definitely improved.

"There is an ongoing effort not just to maintain but to improve on this in the future. It's not just something we think we have sorted and sit back on. We are trying to continuously improve it at both sites."

## Successful festive period for the Lions



The overall winner of the fun run, Morgan Davies, with Coun Mike Clarke.

**PORHCRAWL Lions** have had a busy, very successful Christmas and Santa was delighted that a record number of children visited his grotto.

The tea party for the older citizens of Porthcawl, held at Trinity Church, was attended by over 60 guests, who enjoyed an afternoon of carol singing and food, finished with a visit from Santa.

Conditions for the Boxing Day fun run were, for once, ideal and attracted what is probably

John Cosson

## Wear a pin for Marie Curie!

MARIE CURIE Cancer Care is appealing to residents to donate an hour of their time in February and March – to collect for the charity's annual Great Daffodil Appeal.

The charity needs volunteer collectors to encourage people to purchase the familiar daffodil pin.

The money raised will help Marie Curie Nurses to provide more free care to local people with terminal illnesses in their own homes.

Contact [www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil) for full information.

## Campaigner hands in 'gagging Bill' petition

RIGHT: Campaigner Luke Biddle hands in the petition.

LOCAL campaigner Luke Biddle has handed in a petition to Ogmores MP Huw Irranca-Davies, from thousands of people opposed to the so-called 'Gagging Bill' currently working its way through Parliament.

Luke explained: "Instead of tackling shady lobbying by big business as the bill is supposed to, it will clamp down on freedom of speech and gag charities, campaigning groups and the rest of society. I urge



people to sign the petition organised by campaign organisation 38 Degrees, before free speech is silenced in this country."

The MP said: "The UK Government's 'Transparency and Lobbying Bill' has been roundly criticised as a brutal attack on freedom of speech by charities in Bridgend, Wales and

throughout the UK, who say that it will stop them speaking out.

"Organisations as diverse as the Women's Institute, the Wildlife Trusts, Mumsnet, the Countryside Alliance, Friends of the Earth, Liberty and many health charities have issued a joint statement, saying that the Lobbying Bill risks profoundly undermining the very fabric of our democracy by significantly limiting the right of organisations – from charities and community groups to think tanks and blog sites – to speak out on some of the most important issues facing this country and the planet."

"Labour has fought this dog's breakfast of a Bill through every stage in Parliament, yet David Cameron seems intent on restricting the ability of civic society to speak out. Luke's petition adds strength to our opposition to this attack on democracy, and will help us force the Government to back down."

## PUPILS SEND A 'SCHOOL IN A BOX'

**PORHCRAWL Comprehensive School's 'Leu Club'** raised enough funds to send a complete 'School in a Box' to Syria via UNICEF.

The box contains enough materials for 40 children to have some form of education, helping to bring some normality to their disturbed lives.

At the moment, with matched funding from the UK Government, the club envisages two boxes being provided. The cost of each box is £142.

Many thanks to all those who have helped by buying raffle tickets during the year.

Also, the Leos have made donations of £25 each to the local branches of Diabetes UK, Alzheimer's, Heart Foundation, and Emmaus, plus at the moment, there should be some boxes in the assembly points to receive

donations of canned food (ring pull), pasta/rice tubs and warm gloves and hats. These will be distributed to the homeless of Porthcawl and Bridgend via the Wallich Group.

Leos have been involved with the Christmas tree display at All Saints, with a tree made from driftwood.

They have helped with the Lions grotto in John Street by dressing up as elves and helping Santa meet the young people of the town.

One of our number is entered in a UK-wide competition to find the Young Ambassador for 2013-14 and some of us will be travelling to Newport to support our candidate on January 19.

All pupils are welcome to attend meetings which are normally held on Wednesday lunchtime in P3. It is a club run by the members, and we are responsible for success or failure of events. LP

The home of 'Stella' series 3. Starts 24th Jan Sky 1

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# MOTHER NATURE FLEXES HER MUSCLES AS SEA FRONT TAKES A REAL POUNDING



PHOTOGRAPHS of Porthcawl's harbour light, dwarfed by giant waves, have become a staple of newspapers in recent years – and it is difficult to come up with a new angle.

Glyn Evans's image (above) – dark, threatening, and almost a cross between a French impressionist painting and a Rorschach test – is a welcome new angle!

PHOTOGRAPHS  
by **GLYN EVANS**

OTHER PICTURES ARE  
AVAILABLE

They can be purchased  
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**LEFT:**  
The storm pushed  
the water in  
Porthcawl's new  
marina to very high  
levels.

**RIGHT:**  
In a Porthcawl  
street, this garage  
had the roof blown  
off, and the door  
blown in by the  
strong winds.

**BELOW:**  
The images below  
show the extent of  
the flooding along  
the River Ogmore.



## FOOTBALL TEAMS ARE IN ACTION

THIS Saturday will see Bridgend DFC take on Skem Menace FC at Litchard Park in the Welsh Challenge Cup provided by the Skems to bring a Manchester team and Bridgend closer together.

Both teams who play small-sided games around the UK and in the Special Olympics are now challenging each other in a 11-a-side to see who has improved the most over the last three years.

Bridgend DFC recently won gold at the Jersey Games and the mighty Skems won medals at the Special Olympics National Games in Bath.

This looks to be a very good even game and would love the support of the local community; kick off is at 1pm.

**KELLY HALL**



**RIGHT:**  
A cabin cruiser  
is safe in  
Porthcawl  
marina, as the  
storm rages.

**LEFT:**  
A traditional  
shot of  
Porthcawl's  
harbour light  
at twilight, with  
the waves still  
pounding away  
at the shore-  
line.





## Why Stephen and Debbie were inspired to organise swim for Macmillan Cancer Support

A BRIDGEND couple have been so inspired by the work of a cancer charity's rehabilitation team that they are organising a Swimathon relay to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support in the town.

Stephen and Debbie Spencer-Evans, from Brackla, are part of a group of people affected by cancer who are organising the event to say 'thank you' for the support they have received from the enhanced cancer rehabilitation team at Singleton Hospital.

The Swimathon takes place at Halo Leisure, Bridgend Recreation Centre on Friday January 31, between 9am – 12 noon.

Stephen said: "The original plan was to take part in the Cardiff Half Marathon last year, however, due to mobility challenges, we were unable to fulfil our plan, so together with Angie and Lesley, who use the

hydrotherapy pool at Singleton Hospital, we set to work with other ideas and came up with a marathon in the water!

"Stuart at Halo Leisure in Bridgend has been a great support and offered us the use of the pool at the recreation centre and the rest is history."

Stephen's wife and Swimathon organiser Debbie said: "We are hoping to raise as much money as possible for the Macmillan unit so that others affected by cancer can access the amazing support Stephen has experienced."

"Anyone can take part and those wishing to come along, either to participate or to volunteer on the day will be most welcome," Debbie added.

Stephen was diagnosed with cancer in his jaw and neck glands in August 2012, which meant he needed a 13-hour operation to remove two thirds of his jaw and the glands.

Following the operation, he had to learn to swallow and talk again as well as learning to walk differently after surgeons

removed bone from his right leg to rebuild his jaw. He later had chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment.

In March, Stephen met Macmillan oncology physiotherapist Kathryn Elias and Macmillan therapy assistant James Noble, after struggling with his balance following chemotherapy at Singleton Hospital.

Stephen said: "The Macmillan team have made all the difference in the world. Before I met the team I was on a very fast downward spiral, I was very depressed and without their help I wouldn't be here now."

"It was when I was having chemotherapy that Kath and James came to speak to me about my balance. They got me a walking stick and referred me to their enhanced cancer rehabilitation programme. They got me started with hydrotherapy, Tai Chi for my balance and later light circuit training."

He has started the National Exercise Referral Scheme at

the hydrogym at Halo Leisure Centre, Bridgend and regularly meets with the Macmillan team to discuss his care plan.

Nicola Newhams, fundraising manager at Macmillan Cancer Support, added: "Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face. And the feelings of loneliness and isolation that so many people experience make it even harder."

"Now, more than ever, we need people like Steve, Debbie, Angie, Lesley and the staff at Halo Leisure Centre to join our team and get involved. We rely on our supporters for 98 per cent of our income and such donations make a real difference to those affected by cancer."

To find out how you can help, call 0300 1000 200 or visit [www.macmillan.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/fundraising). For information or support relating to cancer, call the Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 000 (9am to 8pm Monday to Friday) or visit [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk).

## Stalwart is recognised in Honours list

COUN Gwyn John has netted a British Empire Medal for a lifetime's service to grassroots football in Llantwit Major in the New Year's Honours List, writes TIM CHAPMAN.



GWYN JOHN BEM.

Gwyn and his wife, Gloria, received a letter notifying them of the honour on November 15 – and from then until New Year's Eve, when the official announcement was made, had to keep the news a secret.

For Gwyn, a man steeped in Welsh football, being recognised for his work with fellow football enthusiasts and youngsters in the town has come as a special thrill.

"When the letter arrived, I was amazed – hit for six."

"Years ago, someone in Llantwit stopped me and was kind enough to say 'you should get a gong for your work in football'."

"I laughed and said 'people get gongs for bravery, not community work'."

Gwyn was obsessed with football from a young age and has been involved in the game for more than 60 years as a player, coach, manager, club secretary and administrator.

"As a youngster, football came before everything. I ate, drank and slept football!"

Llantwit Major has always been known as a rugby stronghold, but Gwyn always thought there was enough room for both the round ball and oval ball in the town.

"One comment drove me on. Once, when I was young we were playing football and a certain person said: 'What the hell are you doing, playing football? It won't last five minutes here'."

Gwyn was determined that it should last longer than five minutes, and a vocation to the game was born.

Harry Wilkinson had been a stalwart of Llantwit Major football in the pre-war years, but following the war, there had been a lull in participation.

In 1962, Gwyn helped to set up Llantwit Major Athletic Football Club and was the assistant secretary.

To get the club off the ground and keep it going, he and other club officials held fundraising events and sold tickets door to door.

In 1967, he became the club secretary and it was a real boost for the town when it entered the South Wales Amateur League in the 1971-72 season.

"At the time, there

Gwyn's proudest achievements have been in providing opportunities for the young people of the town to play a great sport and develop as personalities – and also help create leagues like the South Wales FA Youth League for them to play in.

"It is about making them grow up to be good people. I've always said to them 'I hope you're doing well at school and you're doing your homework'."

"I believe intelligent boys make good footballers."

"It has been great over the years to see them coming back to watch their sons and grandsons play!"

Some Llantwit footballers, such as Wesley Burns, Pat Mountain and Martin Hancock, have even tasted success at full Football League level.

When there has been a talented local youngster, it has often been Gwyn who has contacted a higher level club, inviting them to send a scout in the hope of helping them progress in the game.

Gwyn has one more surprise in store – he will soon be notified of when and where the BEM presentation will be made.

## Looking back on another successful year at town U3A

IT is the time of the year when we review our past performance and our plans for the future.

There must be few organisations that can claim to have brought such pleasure and enjoyment to all of its members consistently throughout the past year.

If you don't know from the inside what makes the story of the Porthcawl U3A special, then you can be forgiven for thinking the organisation is designed for academics. Nothing could be further from the truth.

All U3As – and there are some 930 established nationally representing 315,000 individual members – are democratic, self-funded groups that provide all types of educational, creative and leisure activities for people who are no longer in full employment.

It was another vintage year, as the organisation, ably led by its chairman Handel Davies, goes from strength-to-strength. Thirty-five or more interest groups have met in venues all over Porthcawl and are led by wonderfully dedicated volunteer convenors, who donate their knowledge and experience for the benefit of the members that number over 500.

Each month, a menu is produced of events taking place every day of the week for members to choose from. While there are academic subjects that can be followed such as languages, philosophy, science and art, there are many more like Canasta, Scrabble, bridge and even Singalong that are enjoyable social occasions, which help create an excellent balance.

Apart from these interest groups, the organisation arranges monthly talks that everyone is welcome to attend and monthly field trips to places of interest, as well as visits to the theatre and special concerts.

Christmas time saw us in Cardiff shopping followed by attendance at a matinee performance of *Singing in the Rain* at the Wales Millennium Centre.

In the summer, we travelled to Stratford-upon-Avon to enjoy the Shakespeare play *All's Well That Ends Well*.

The year was especially eventful as we also hosted a memorable study day at the Hi Tide, attended by 300 mem-

bers from all over south Wales, that was addressed by Rhodri Morgan, Michael Sheen's father, and a professor from Cardiff University, who illustrated the Richard Burton diaries.

Our monthly talks have again been of the highest quality and the topics have had something for everyone. They have ranged from exploring the Orkneys, the history of the Welsh slate industry, various aspects of photography, to 'Wenglish', as well as the inside story of Parc Prison.

The year concluded with our president's research into the life of John F Kennedy followed by an afternoon considering art in history and, finally, an exceptional experience when we were invited to 'Sleep with Camels,' before being taken along an exhausting walk through the National Parks and the Grand Canyon in America.

Our field visits have again been meticulously arranged. We have visited Cardiff Castle, Malvern horticultural show, Dyham Park near Bath, Laycock Abbey and the Fox Talbot photographic museum near Chippenham.

An exceptionally enjoyable day was spent touring Duffryn House and Gardens, followed by the usual lunch and a sedate cruise around Cardiff Bay.

This year's excursions culminated with a visit to Cribbs Causeway and Bristol Museum to view their Roman Empire exhibition and our annual pilgrimage to Llandaff Cathedral to join in the carol singing before Christmas.

The new year programme will be equally interesting, with visits as far afield as Hampton Court and our talks are guaranteed to continue to be of the highest quality.

All are welcome to become new members, so anyone wishing to receive more details, or perhaps arrange a taster visit to Porthcawl U3A, should call 01656 783663. Age is not a problem – people of all ages are welcome.

CLIVE MORT

## Record number of children in care prompts fresh fostering appeal

AT the time when people make New Year resolutions, Bridgend County Borough Council is asking residents to think about "making a difference" to someone else's life, and to consider fostering.

"Most children and young people will have celebrated Christmas and New Year with their families, but there are others who are less fortunate and, for many reasons, are unable to live at home," a spokeswoman said.

In Bridgend county borough alone, the number of children coming into care last year increased by 12 per cent to a total of 387 'looked after children'.

As a result, the council's fostering service has a shortage of carers, and particularly needs to recruit people willing to foster siblings and teenagers.

Coun Huw David, cabinet member for children and young people, said: "In January, many people think about making positive changes in their life, so we are asking whether people can think about fostering and make a real difference."

"We are experiencing record levels of children coming into care so we need more foster carers to offer stability and a loving home, something every child deserves."

"We want people from all walks of life so we can find the right foster home for every child. They don't have to be a

certain age, own their home or be in a relationship."

"I would encourage people to contact Bridgend Foster Care to help decide whether fostering is right for them or come along to our next meet and greet event on Wednesday, January 15 at Bryngarw House. It will provide a great chance to talk to our existing carers."

Sam Bromley, a foster carer, said: "As a single mum, I wasn't sure whether I would be able to foster but that was far from the truth."

"Obviously, I was worried how it would affect my own children but they love being part of a fostering family."

"There is nothing better than watching a vulnerable and sad child turn into a happy one, reaching their full potential. Fostering is without a doubt extremely rewarding and I recommend it."

Foster carers are given extensive training and full support, and receive an allowance for their role. Child fostering allowance is not taxed, and does not count against state benefits.

For more information about becoming a foster carer, call 01656 642674, or visit [www.bridgend.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/fostering).

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# 'THE JENKIN HENRY TEA' TRADITION BRINGS CHEER TO NATIVES OF TOWN!



Photographs by  
Keith E Morgan.

Ceri Joseph of Porthcawl Museum giving her slide presentation on old Porthcawl.



ABOVE: Mrs Mair Harry



Mr Philip Howell



Mrs Eileen Evans



Mrs Mary Evans



Mrs Sylvia Thomas



Mrs. Linda Saunders



ABOVE: Miss Cecile Jones



Mr John David MBE



Mrs Julia Morris



Ms Rose Power



Mrs Jeanne Rees

Jenkin Henry was born in Newton, Porthcawl, in 1833. At any early age, he emigrated to Melbourne, Australia in order to seek his fortune. This he succeeded in doing. He became a weigh-bridge owner and later, an adjuster of weighbridges. As a wealthy business man, Jenkin resided in the prosperous suburb of Carlton where he married late in life to Ann Edmonds, a widow 13 years his senior. This union, however, did not produce any children.

He never forgot Porthcawl and when he died on August 4, 1919 at the ripe old age of 86, he left several bequests to organisations in the town. One legacy included £200 to be invested by the then Porthcawl Urban District Council with directions that the interest accrued each year was to be distributed at Christmas.

The above legacy automatically passed to the Porthcawl Town Council on its formation in 1974. Subsequently, the interest has been used each year to provide a



ABOVE: The Mayor and Mayoress, Couns Norah and Mike Clarke, with Mr and Mrs Stephen and Gloria Larnar.

Christmas Tea in The Rest Convalescent Home for the 20 oldest residents of the town that were actually born in Porthcawl. In memory of its benefactor, the event is called the Jenkin Henry Tea. For the first time, the Jenkin Henry Tea was held in the Glamorgan Hotel as the Rest has now been sold.

This year, 18 of Porthcawl's oldest 'native' residents were invited by the town council to attend the Jenkin Henry Tea. The guests were entertained with a very nostalgic

slide show of Porthcawl by Ceri Joseph of the Porthcawl Museum.

After the show, they were treated to a scrumptious tea and waited on by the Mayor and Mayoress of Porthcawl, Couns Michael and Nora Clarke, as well as the town clerk, Alison Thomas and her assistant, Sarah Watkins. In his introduction, the Mayor welcomed all the guests and thanked Ceri Joseph for a very interesting presentation and Sarah, the assistant town clerk, for organis-

ing the event.

After tea, the Mayor and Mayoress of Porthcawl, Couns Michael and Nora Clarke, presented each of the guests individually with a plaque to commemorate the occasion as well as a box of chocolates.

Mrs Mary Webber and Mr. David Kingdon received their plaques and chocolates during a home visit by the Mayor and Mayoress of Porthcawl.



Mrs Sarah Morgan



Ms Patricia Sheen



Mrs Joan Hughes



Mrs Florence Bainbridge

## Maria claims world record

VALE adventurer Maria Leijerstam has become the first person to cycle to the South Pole from the edge of the continent in 10 days, beating all other speed records.

"Her success was down to meticulous planning, super fitness, both physically and mentally, and pure determination," said her mother, Adrienne Leijerstam.

"From the time she was 12 years old and announced she wanted to be an astronaut, Maria has always been an adventurer. We are thrilled she has made it in such good time."

Maria (35) a former manage-

ment consultant, who now runs Multisport Wales, describes Antarctica as "vicious". Her journey has not been without its problems. At one point, the sweat on the inside of her boots froze at minus 35 degrees and each rest time she struggled to erect her tent in howling winds.

For 10 days, she heated her freeze-dried food by melting snow on a small Primus stove inside her tent.

Snow drifts, complete white-outs and crevasses marred her passage, but even so, she was able to cycle the whole distance on her three-wheeled recumbent PolarCycleTM.

A two-year planning and development programme by the

White Ice Cycle team produced a unique cycle design that was then manufactured by Inspired Cycle Engineering of Cornwall.

Roald Amundsen was the first person to reach the South Pole in 1911 using two-metre long skis which made crevasse crossing easier for him.

He was five weeks ahead of a British party led by Robert Falcon Scott, as part of the Terra Nova Expedition.

Amundsen and his team returned safely to their base, and later learned that Scott and his four companions had died on their return journey.



# YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE COMMUNITY NEWS

**Well bowled!**  
MANY congratulations to two individuals from Bridgend county borough – firstly, **Alun Hodges** from Maesteg who has been appointed team manager for the bowling team representing Wales in the **Commonwealth Games in Glasgow next July.**

Paul Taylor from Pontycymer has been chosen to play in the team. Well done to both.

**Volunteers**  
IT is that time of year again when nominations for the Mayor of Bridgend County Borough citizenship awards are submitted.

Over the years, I personally have sent in nominations to the Mayor for individuals I believed deserved recognition for the effort they had put into improving the community.

One had been seriously ill and was becoming handicapped. When he received his award it

gave him such a fillip that for a while he overcame his difficulties to carry on helping others.

Others had regularly given up their free time to help in sections of the community and each had been overjoyed, when they realised their actions had been recognised, the first time they knew they had been nominated was when they received a letter from the Mayor's office.

These awards are open to people who live or work in the Bridgend area, who have spent time helping others. If you know someone you believe deserves a nomination contact bob.phillips@bridgend.gov.uk.

Nominations close on Friday, January 24, and award winners are honoured at a special event hosted by the Mayor in the Civic Offices, Bridgend in March.

**Remembering Ed Evans**

EACH year, Betws Young Farmers have a special carol service in St David's church, Betws.

Last December, even though it was a dreadful night, the collection raised £538, which was donated to the Ed Evans Foundation.

Edward was the son of John and Sue Evans of Marcross and subsequently Church Farm, Monkash.

He had a benign brain tumour and after a series of operations died in October 2007 at the age of 27. He had launched the foundation in 2006 after being diagnosed and it was Ed's wish that his family and friends continue the work of the foundation.

The aim is to raise money for Cancer Research Wales and brain tumour research. The foundation also raises money for local worthy causes.

This was the 24th successive year that the Bridgend and District Young Farmers had held a carol service in St David's Betws.

**Choir tribute**

DECEMBER was a pleasant and sociable month for Cŵr Merched Cwm Llynfi (Llynfi Valley Ladies Choir) which performed in a community carol concert for residents in Bryncelyn Home, Maesteg.

It also had a social evening in the Great House, Laleston, to honour Margaret Griffiths, assistant musical director who had just retired from her post as head of Bridgend library service.

The choristers had not informed Margaret that they had arranged with the management of the restaurant to sing a few songs before the meal. Margaret conducted one item before she was allowed to sit down to her meal!

On New Year's Eve, the choir led the hymn singing at the wedding of Louise and Sanjay in St Iltyd's Church, Bridgend.

The choir rehearses in the Celtic Club, Garth, on Wednesday evenings from 7pm and new members are always welcome.

I have known Margaret for a number of years, and wish her a

**NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS**  
A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM:

If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me.

I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: **CLIVE MITCHELL**  
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email: tynycod1@yahoo.co.uk



long, healthy and happy retirement.

**School support**

THE members of Nazareth Chapel, Bryncethin, are supporting Bookshine High School, Nairobi, Kenya.

The school is in a poverty-stricken area, and requires funds to educate the children.

At 10.45am tomorrow (January 10) members will be selling breakfasts to raise money for the school. Everyone is welcome.

**Foodbank benefit**

TWO young sopranos from the Bridgend area will perform in a concert at Aberkenfig Bible Church (Old Lyric Cinema), Pandyrddon on January 17 at 7.15pm.

Rhian Hughes (former head girl Ynysawdre Comprehensive School) and Ellie Barham (student at Pencoed Comprehensive School) have both taken the lead roles as Dorothy in the musical *Wizard of Oz*, in their respective school concerts, and are aiming for a career in musical theatre.

The compère is Ryan Wood, musical director of Noteworthy mixed voice choir, which is also taking part in the concert.

Ryan's choir was originally formed to raise money for cancer research; and has contributed thousands of pounds to this charity. The choir's accompanist, Rhian Jenkins, is also noted for efforts to help charities.

Rhian is head of the music department at Pencoed Comprehensive, and is also musical director of Cŵr Meibion

Maesteg a'r Cylch (Maesteg and District male choir), which is holding its annual concert in Maesteg town hall on January 24.

Another worthy of a mention is Gillian Ridout, musical director of Brackla Community Chorus, the other choir performing in the concert.

Gillian is also a music teacher and teaches percussion instruments to pupils in the Merthyr Tydfil area. This choir is also renowned for raising money for charities.

The accompanist is Gareth Waite, also accompanist for Ogmores Valley male voice choir.

Everyone taking part in the concert is freely giving up their time to raise as much money as possible for this worthwhile cause. The church is providing its building and equipment for free, and other organisations, including The GEM, and individuals have contributed towards raffle prizes.

The charity trustees would like to thank everyone involved for their magnificent effort in helping those who at the moment are struggling to support themselves and their families.

**Carers meet**  
BRIDGEND Carers' Centre is based at 87, Park Street, Bridgend, CF31 4AZ (01656 658479).

On January 13/20/27, there will be the book Cwtch between 1pm and 2pm.

On January 14, there is a theatre trip to the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff to see the musical *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

The coach leaves at 6.30pm from Hope Chapel, Bridgend, and returns at approximately 10.30pm.

On January 15, a representative of Howell's solicitors will be available to give free advice to carers in the centre from 10am to 12.30pm.

Please telephone the above number to make an appointment.

The Community Café will be open between 12.30 and 3.30pm, for light refreshments.

On January 16, the Outreach Group will be at Maesteg town council offices to offer support and advice to carers in the area.

**Curry night**

RIDING for the Disabled, Bridgend, will benefit from a curry night on January 24 at 7.30pm in Tondur Cricket Club. The cost of the meal and entertainment for the evening is £10; to reserve a place, telephone Andrew on 01656 663652.

**Tondur primary**

TONDUR Primary School headteacher Mrs Susan Pilcher advises parents that the school will be holding a

session on Wednesday mornings from 9.45 to 11.45am in the Heol Persondy building, Aberkenfig, where you can bring your child.

Tondur Toddlers enables the child to meet others in the same age group and learn how to socialise with peers, while parents chat and make friends. It commences on January 15.

The school also has a successful free breakfast club, which children attend from 8.10am to 9.15am in the Meadow Street building. Attendance in its Heol Persondy building is from 8.10am to 9.30am.

**United churches**

MEMBERS of the Aberkenfig and District United Churches are invited to attend the next meeting on Monday, January 13 at 7pm in Smyrna Chapel, Pen-y-Fai.

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## Centre offers meditation in Porthcawl

A PORTHCRAWL prayer centre is extolling the virtues of silent meditation, and is inviting local people to try it out.

St Clare's Prayer Centre is in Newton and the house, set in private gardens, has views across the Bristol Channel.

A spokesman said: "Olive Nicholls gave her home and gardens to the nuns of St Clare's in recognition of their guidance and education to the school children of St Clare's."

"In recognition of this gift, the nuns developed a home for people to come and have time out. The prayer centre has a long-established silent meditation group that meets every Wednesday at 7.30pm."

"A full programme for 2014 has been developed so, if you are interested in meditation, contact us via [www.stclares-prayercentre.co.uk](http://www.stclares-prayercentre.co.uk) or telephone 01656 783701."

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# PORTHCAWL TAKES IT ON THE CHIN AS STORMS LASH THE COASTLINE

THE storms have been going so long that it is hard to remember that the first really rough day was last Friday (January 3).

Sea defences were breached in a number of places, and council workers were called out to supply sandbags and monitor the situation in a number of areas.

Photographs on this page were taken by Malcolm Nugent (MN) and Philip Irwin (PI).



ABOVE: The sea is as close to Coney Beach fun fair as it can get!



ABOVE: Waves breached the sea wall near Windsor Road, which was closed while sandbags were put out to protect houses closest to the sea.



LEFT: A massive tree stump was washed onto Newton Beach car park.



On the Saturday (January 4) BCBC closed Beach Road at Newton and hundreds of tons of rocks were used to repair the sea defences.



On Saturday, it was time to start cleaning up in Mackworth Road.





# Community council argues costs can be cut by getting rid of surplus councillors

**THE current Welsh Government review of how Wales is governed has prompted one local community council to call for a big reduction in the size of government.**

**Colwinston Community Council has fired off a strongly-worded response, which says that there are too many AMs, MPs and borough councillors.**

**In the council's response, the respective systems in Wales and Scotland are compared, and The GEM thinks that readers will be interested in the arguments put forward in the letter – extracts from which are published below.**

**WE refer to the Electoral Review Programme 2014 that was circulated some weeks ago.**

This council wishes to take issue with some of the assumptions made when deciding the factors to be used in the consideration of a programme of reviews in Wales. We wish to point out some anomalies that

should be addressed.

Firstly, Wales suffers from a significant level of over-representation. There are 40 members of Parliament, 60 Assembly members and 22 local authorities for a population of approximately 3,100,000 people (2011).

This comes at a cost to the public purse. While the Assembly does not have powers to change the Parliamentary or Assembly representation, it does have the power to tackle the gross over-representation of local councils and councillors.

Wales has more local councillors in the 22 authorities than Scotland, whose population is approximately 5,292,400 (2011 census).

Scotland has 1,223 councillors, with an average of one councillor for 4,327 people. In Wales there are 1,254 councillors over the 22 local authorities, providing one councillor for 2,472 people.

Secondly, the present set-up is expensive. Each councillor in Wales is paid a minimum of £13,175 and if account is

then taken of the additional allowances that are paid for committee chairs etc, this could rise to at least £17,000 pa.

Reducing the number of councils and councillors would save the public purse a minimum of £7,088,150 and possibly at least £9,146,000 each year.

Community and town councillors are not paid (but can claim expenses).

The consequence of having 22 authorities is an enormous cost for providing public services. Figures published in May 2013 showed 56 council employees in Wales taking home salaries of more than £100,000 in 2011/12.

Also, more than 50 chief officers from councils across Wales took home salaries of at least £100,000 in 2011/12.

The salaries covered a range of titles, from chief executives to directors responsible for departments like education, social services, regeneration and the environment.

The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales)

Act 2013 has received Royal Assent and the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, has said: "Through our ambitious five-year legislative programme, we are introducing 'made in Wales' solutions to the issues affecting us as a nation."

"This Act represents a further step in our drive to ensure local democracy in Wales operates as efficiently and effectively as possible."

However, nothing is said or presumably planned which will

address the obvious problem. There are simply too many local authorities in Wales which are costing a fortune to run.

There is a significant knock-on effect to the public purse as a result of the large local government bureaucracy: in Wales the average band D council tax for 2013 – 14 is £1,226.

The Daily Telegraph reported on December 4, 2013, that Hammersmith and Fulham Council, through improvements to

how their services are delivered, are setting next year's band D tax at £735.

It would appear that the perceived wisdom is that the Assembly will continue in its present form with ever-increasing costs that are excused as it accumulates even more powers.

This will mean even fewer funds for service delivery as central government is understandably reluctant to write Wales a blank cheque. This goes unchallenged

at present. Therefore, we propose that as well as local authorities, the Assembly should reduce costs significantly, at least in line with the reductions in Whitehall numbers.

Finally, we would like to suggest that what is actually required is a root and branch review to make radical cuts to the present bureaucracy of local government.

If a reduction of the number of councillors is equivalent to a 40 per cent saving, it should be

possible to substantially reduce local government costs in a similar way.

This will free up revenue which any future Welsh Government can use to reinvest as additional capital to improve the overall delivery of services in Wales.

We ask you therefore to reconsider your review programme and focus on achieving significant savings for the benefit of the people of Wales.

**JANE MOTTE,**  
(Clerk to Colwinston Community Council).

## Free course aims to help cope with cancer news

**MACMILLAN Cancer Support is running a free course in Bridgend – to help people manage the emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis.**

The programme will be held at Ynysawdre Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre in Heol-yr-Ysgol on Tuesdays for six weeks from January 21.

Called Helping to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE), Macmillan's new self-management course will run from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

"Macmillan is offering HOPE to anyone living with a cancer diagnosis. Topics the course focuses on include managing stress, fatigue and body image and living positively with the fear of recurrence," said Susan

Morris, general manager for Macmillan Cancer Support in Wales.

"We at Macmillan know that receiving a cancer diagnosis has a huge emotional impact.

"Macmillan is delighted to be offering HOPE in Wales, as the programme can give people the tools they need to manage the emotional consequences of living with cancer."

People wishing to attend the course must register in advance. Contact Genette Webster on 01656 867960, or email gwebster@macmillan.org.uk.

Macmillan can only fund programmes such as this thanks to the generosity of the public.

To find out how you can help the charity, call 0300 1000 200 or visit [www.macmillan.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/fundraising).

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# Vale out-performs Bridgend when it comes to riding out the recession

**THE stereotype of a prosperous Vale of Glamorgan and a more cash-strapped Bridgend county borough has been reinforced by figures released by the GMB union.**

The figures show that while residents in the Vale have seen their wages rise broadly in line with inflation over the last five years, Bridgend workers' wages have actually fallen!

In real terms, allow-

by **PHILIP IRWIN**

ing for inflation, it means that Vale workers are 1.6 per cent worse off than five years ago – while Bridgend county borough workers are 20.1 per cent down.

The GMB survey covers the period from April 2008 to November 2013, and is the result of analysing official earnings data.

The figures show that in April 2008, average earnings in the Vale were £23,878, while in Bridgend the figure was

slightly lower, at £22,714.

However, by November 2013, that gap has become much bigger. Vale workers now earn an average annual salary of £27,736 (up by 16.2 per cent) while in Bridgend county borough, workers' take home pay has fallen to £22,193 (a fall of 2.3 per cent).

Although Vale workers have seen wages rise by 16.2 per cent, the GMB says that, once

adjusted for inflation, they are 1.6 per cent worse off. Similarly, Bridgend's fall works out at 20.1 per cent.

In the Welsh league table compiled by the GMB, the Vale has done best, while Bridgend has done the worst.

Other areas that have been hit hard are Pembrokeshire (19.4 per cent down after inflation), Swansea (17.1) and Cardiff (15.5 per cent).

The source for the GMB's data was the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

John Philips, GMB Wales secretary, said "These alarming figures show how hard pressed working people across the UK are struggling to pay their bills after years of wage decline and attacks on the living standards of families throughout the land."

"Working people deserve and need a decent pay rise to halt the drop in living standards."

packs, they made the journey in just over four hours, including walking around the centre of Bridgend several times.

George said that their target was to raise £150. However, to date they have raised just over £350 but have not closed the books as people are still donating.

"We cannot believe how much we have raised and we are very grateful to everyone who supported us."

PW

## Older People's champion took roadshow to people of Bridgend and the Vale

**THE Older People's Commissioner for Wales and her team met a total of 400 people at 13 events in Bridgend and the Vale last year.**

The visits formed part of the Commissioner's Engagement Roadshow, which saw a total of 5,400 people at 180 events across Wales.

Commissioner Sarah Rochira and her team travelled over 25,000 miles across the country in 2013, which included visits to groups, organisations and individuals across Bridgend and the Vale.

Engagement events in Bridgend county borough have included the opening of a 'reablement unit' in the town that offers treatments to help people live more independently.

They also met members of Maesteg, Kenfig Hill and Bridgend Shout, and visited the Bridgend Carers' Centre, on Park Street, Bridgend.

On December 19, the Commissioner talked to 20 members of Kenfig Hill Shout at Llys Ton about local issues that matter to them. The engagement was arranged with chairman Stan Rumble, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

She said: "I had been keen to come back and meet Stan again as he made a real impression on me when I met him at the Bridgend Shout event. He was not only a true friend to many, but also a steadfast shoulder to lean on."

"He fought to give you a voice and was the type of person you want to be in the company of. The world needs more people like Stan and he will be truly missed."

In the Vale, they visited the Senior Health Shop and the Friends and Neighbours strawberry cream tea at Beryl Road Pioneer Hall in Barry.

The Commissioner attended the One Voice Wales area committee meeting in Cowbridge in July and Vale of Glamorgan Older People's Forum in September, describing her role and her work to make Wales "a good place to grow older".

In September, members of her team also met Barry Open Door group to discuss transport issues in the town and in October, she officially opened a new mental health unit at University Hospital

Llandough.

Sarah said: "My Engagement Roadshow, which has visited communities across Wales, has allowed older people to share information with me about their experiences, the things that matter most to them and the things that worry them most about growing older in Wales."

"One of the key concerns older people in Bridgend and the Vale have shared with me is the cuts to local bus routes, which leave people lonely and isolated."

"The closure of public toilets, a vital community resource, is also something that many older people in the area have told me they are worried about."

"It is important, even in these difficult financial times, not to lose sight of the vital role services such as these can play in helping people to get out and about, stay engaged with their local communities, and maintain their independence."

## PACT meetings

**LITCHARD, PENDRE AND COITY PACT at The Mission Hall, Litchard Thursday, January 16, at 7pm.**

**CEFN GLAS, LLANGEWYDD and BRYNHAFRYD, and NEWCASTLE PACT at Westward Community Centre, on Monday, January 20, at 5.30pm.**

**OLDCASTLE PACT at The Library, Brynteg Comprehensive School on Wednesday, January 22, at 6.30pm.**

**BRACKLA PACT at Brackla Junior School, Brackla Way, Brackla, on Thursday, January 30, at 6.30pm.**

**PORHCRAWL EAST CENTRAL PACT at Newton Primary School, Porthcawl on Tuesday, January 14 at 7pm.**

**PORHCRAWL WEST CENTRAL PACT at Porthcawl Fire Station on Tuesday, January 28, at 7pm.**

## Pupils' charity walk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Jack said: "We just thought it would be a way of helping others who are in need of our support – especially during the Christmas season."

The walk took place on Friday, December 20. Setting off at 9am on a very dark and wet day, they walked through the centre of town before starting their journey to Bridgend.

With flags from Wales and the Philippines flying from their back-

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# CARDIFF AIRPORT'S 'GOOD NEWS' AS LOST ROUTES ARE REPLACED

**C A R D I F F** AIRPORT was rarely out of the news in the run-up to Christmas, as bad news about losing the budget airline Flybe was followed by better news – with the arrival of new routes, writes **PHILIP IRWIN**.

On top of that, the Welsh Conservative Leader Andrew RT Davies, was scathing about news that the Welsh Government had funded a £10 million loan.

The good news came when the airport announced that CityJet, part of the Air France airline group, will operate Glasgow and Paris (Orly) routes from January 20 –

the same routes dropped by Flybe. An airport spokeswoman described this as a "seamless transition for these vital services from the Welsh capital".

CityJet's initial schedule will offer a twice daily weekday service to Glasgow with daily weekend flights. Paris will be served by a daily flight Monday to Friday, and on Sundays.

From the start of the summer schedule on March 30, flights to Edinburgh and Jersey will be added. Edinburgh will be served three times a day, Monday to Friday with one flight on Saturdays and two on Sundays.

Jersey will be served with five weekly return flights. The summer schedule will also see a third daily flight added to the Glasgow route on

Thursdays and Fridays while Paris (Orly) will then be served every day of the week.

By the middle of summer, CityJet will be operating more than 80 flights a week in and out of Cardiff Airport.

Christine Ourmières, CityJet's chief executive, said: "We are confident that our network and schedule to these four new destinations will be a success – both for the Welsh community and for CityJet."

Cardiff Airport's chief executive, Jon Horne, said: "This is fantastic news and I'm delighted CityJet has responded so quickly to pick up these vitally important routes from Cardiff Airport."

"It is always good to welcome a new airline to Cardiff; in CityJet's case it's really great, given the scale of the commitment they have made to the airport and to Wales."

Commenting on the announcement, Cardiff Airport's chairman, Lord Rowe-Beddoe, said: "This is excellent news. I am proud that the management team has succeeded in securing a new airline to fill the breach left by Flybe."

"The speed with which this has been achieved is testament to management's commitment to ensuring the airport's success."

However, the Leader of the Welsh Conservatives, Andrew RT Davies, was still concerned.

Commenting on the confirmation of a £10 million Welsh Government loan for the airport – following its initial "nationalisation" for £52 million earlier this year, the regional AM said: "The recent purchase by the Scottish Government of Prestwick Airport for one pound, puts the Welsh Government's £52 million acquisition of Cardiff Airport in sharp focus."

"In the interim, there is little to suggest any marked improvement in performance, and nothing to justify Labour's claims that the airport is now worth more than when they bought it."

"Frontline services continue to suffer and yet another £10 million in loans has somehow been found by Labour ministers already imposing record-breaking NHS budget cuts. You couldn't make it up."

"We all want to see the airport succeed and part of that process will involve improving the experience for passengers using the site."

"However, what concerns me most as a Vale resident is the fact that the Labour Welsh

Government can rustle up £10 million to pay for this, whilst the NHS and rural bus services are being cut back altogether."

There was, however, further good news for the airport when Europe's largest airline group announced it was launching a low-cost route to Dusseldorf, starting in spring 2014, while the luxury Caribbean tour operator, Sandals, is introducing its first Barbados flight from Wales.

Germanwings, owned by the Lufthansa Group,

will start weekly Dusseldorf flights on April 5. An airport spokeswoman said: "The route is an important strand of the strategy to bring more tourists to Wales, and the airport team has worked closely with Visit Wales, the Welsh Government tourism body, to secure it".

The two-week Sandals flight to Barbados departs in March. In addition, P&O Cruises' new chartered flights to Barbados from Cardiff Airport in January and February 2014 sold out

in just a matter of weeks after being launched earlier this year.

Vueling's winter programme has been expanded from Cardiff, with additional flights to Malaga and Alicante, operating all year round, and Flybe's have added ski flights to Chambéry, Lyon, Grenoble and Geneva.

Cardiff Airport chief executive, Jon Horne, said the developments are encouraging:

"The ongoing success we have in attracting new services means the hard work of the team here is

paying off. It is also encouraging that airlines and tour operators are making these commitments to Cardiff Airport and Wales, and this gives us confidence that we are on track to achieve our longer-term goals."

Then, on Monday, January 6, Air Malta announced that it was adding an extra four departures as a prelude to its summer 2014 charter season. The direct flights from Cardiff Airport to Malta are programmed to depart every Tuesday through to October 21.

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Branch Manager Phil Powell feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthkerry areas and Phil is finding that his

approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've

done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Phil a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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# Out and About with The GEM

## WHAT'S ON IN YOUR AREA

### Lib-Dem surgery

Regional Lib-Dem AM for South Wales Central, Eluned Parrott, will hold an advice surgery at Morrisons Supermarket, Penny Way, Barry, between 1pm and 2pm, tomorrow (Friday, January 10).

Residents who have any issues of concern to them or their local community, are encouraged to pop along.

No appointment is necessary.

### Vale AM's surgery

THE Vale AM, Jane Hutt, will be holding a surgery on Saturday (January 11) from 10am to 12 noon at Barry CAB office, 119 Broad Street, Barry.

### Toys and trains

CARDIFF Toy and Train Sale will be held this Saturday, January 11, at 10.30am in Penarth Leisure Centre, Andrew Road, Cogan.

This will be the first event at Cogan in 2014 with others following in April, July and October.

Organizer Chris Dyer said: "We now offer some 100 tables operated by over 40 traders from all over Wales and England - with the stock on offer, old and new, being unbeatable."

"The show is now firmly established as the leading such event in the Principality."

Telephone 01643 702757 and 07966 694579, website: www.chrisdyerfairs.co.uk for further details.

### Councillors' surgery

DYFAN Labour councillors Claire Curtis and Anthony Powell will be holding a drop-in advice surgery for residents of Dyfan Ward on Saturday, January 11, at the Buttrills Community

### Centre, North Walk, Barry.

The surgery will run from 11am to 12pm.

If any residents have an issue they would like to discuss with the councillors, go along, as no appointment is necessary.

### Dinas Powys History Society

THE next meeting of the Dinas Powys Local History Society will be held on Tuesday, January 14, in Kynance Hall.

There will be a talk by Mr Don Llewellyn on 'Penttyrch and the Garth Mountain'.

An entrance fee of £3 for non-members and £1.50 for members will be charged.

All are very welcome to attend. BW

### Church service

A SERVICE will be held at St Hilary

Church at 6.30pm on Sunday, January 12 to rededicate the restored west window and to thank the village and all others involved for their help and support. It will be conducted by the Archbishop of Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, followed by refreshments in the village hall.

### Bridgend WI meeting

THE correct date for this month's meeting of Bridgend WI is January 21, and not as previously stated.

They meet at Hope Baptist church hall on the third Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm and visitors are welcome.

Telephone 01656 653085, or 01656 857818 for further details.

## Top rally rider Stan to tell all at Pontyclun!

ONE of Britain's most successful rally motorcyclists is to give a talk about his adventures on four continents at Pontyclun Rugby Club on Friday, January 24.

Stan Watt has taken part in three editions of the Dakar rally, finishing a commendable 25th overall in last year's event in South America.

He took a top-ten place in this year's Safari Rally of Australasia, and has scored numerous suc-

cesses in African rallies, as well as cross-country and endurance events in the UK.

Stan will bring two racing motorcycles and a rally truck to the rugby club, where the doors will open at 7.30pm.

Admission to the evening is £5. Proceeds will be divided between Air Ambulance Wales and the talk's organisers, the Trail Riders Fellowship.

To prebook tickets, contact richardsimpson94@yahoo.co.uk or call 07812 40201.

## Ty Hafan winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D807.

● £2,000: 447054.

● The rollover, which now stands at £2,000 was not won this week.

● £10: 2 8 4 8 5 8, 402065, 723300, 701604, 728248, 445294, 6 6 5 0 6 8, 8 5 9 8 3 3, 848933, 376899, 298156, 409149, 894339, 635648, 374451, 254364, 196019, 760087, 402844.

● £5: 663657, 567723, 274948, 754790, 162862, 610324, 649369, 742078, 746676, 556583, 292818, 247422, 114845, 266757, 683402, 781562, 453453, 220298, 503682, 490459, 290543, 568655, 814872, 505051, 868212, 519145, 658298, 689274, 831444, 345452, 368563, 730443, 463055, 735148, 540131, 852567, 522516, 322843, 478548, 806698, 699986, 225745, 892420, 491572, 346847, 886833, 857279, 463733, 215760, 539576, 707702, 575039, 138316, 592782, 628095, 396409, 693434, 170366, 793982, 644475.

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number

D808.

● £2,000: 179756, Tonypany.

● The rollover, which now stands at £2,500, was not won this week.

● £10: 757650, 358265, 767762, 707844, 549560, 706440, 371840, 286949, 505333, 973859, 475335, 523213, 842411, 701399, 526489, 159855, 439206, 314967, 194926, 591335.

● £5: 797444, 201045, 144143, 131310, 832567, 290165, 833193, 306274, 528674, 387694, 845458, 325866, 933055, 983691, 459861, 234593, 194835, 185872, 617068, 740294, 497470, 162499, 485358, 563277, 519004, 393024, 165196, 638781, 297681, 196814, 570717, 248212, 449993, 706191, 489933, 194669, 326524, 396569, 630656, 668308, 971743, 523958, 883327, 229590, 277157, 749425, 348878, 750243, 291978, 138868, 264425, 520492, 654541, 590868, 306225, 421717, 699524, 428675, 742154, 375888.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please telephone 029 2053 2300.

## NOTE CHANGE OF DATE CARDIFF TOY & TRAIN SALE

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Joanne - 01446 404897

**TUESDAY**

**Barry - 5.30pm**  
Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church,  
Trinity Street  
Joanne - 01446 404897

**Llantwit Major 9.30am**  
Catholic Church,  
Ham Lane East  
Helen - 01446 750738

**Barry 7.30pm**  
Gibbonsdown Community Centre  
Nicky - 07703313619

**Llantwit Major 5.30pm & 7.30pm**  
Our Lady & St Iltyd Church (Catholic)  
Ham Lane East  
Helen - 01446 750738

**Sully - 6.30pm**  
The Old School South Road  
Niki - 01446 740394

**WEDNESDAY**

**Barry 4.45 & 6.45pm**  
St. Francis Millennium Centre, Park Road, Porth-y-Castell  
Annmarie - 01446 736534

**Sully 5.30 & 7.30pm**  
New Jerusalem Church, Tynewydd Road, opp. library, Barry Lorraine - 01446 407002

**Rhoose 5.30 & 7.30pm**  
Celtic Way Community Centre, Celtic Way, Rhoose.  
Teresa - 07808 077312

**Barry - 10.15am**  
St Helen's Church Hall Wyndham Street  
Niki - 01446 740394

**FRIDAY**

**Dinas Powys 9.30am**  
The Cabin by swimming pool, Hebron Hall  
Nicky - 07703313619

**NEW GROUP From Saturday 4th January**

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**MONDAY**

**Barry 5.30 & 7.30pm**  
New Jerusalem Church, Tynewydd Road, opp. library, Barry Lorraine - 01446 407002

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**JANUARY 18th from 2pm - 5pm**

**at Mount Sorrel Hotel,**

**Porthkerry Road, Barry, CF62 7XY**

**Participants must be 14 years of age or over**

**THE GEM/FERRIS  
Entertainment  
Performance  
Scholarship is a  
New Year tradition  
in the Vale and  
Bridgend which is  
celebrating its sev-  
enth year.**

Last year marked the 10th anniversary of Peter Ferris launching his acting masterclasses locally, and the arrival of Ferris Entertainment in Wales.

Peter captured the interest of the film world last year, due his innovative approach to creating half hour movies. Over the past two years, he has devised a way of shooting 30-minute films in just two days, using a combination of conventional cameras and smart-phones.

His knowledge is much in demand and he hosted workshops at the 'Marbella International Film Festival' in Spain, and the 'South By South West Eco Film Festival' in Austin, USA.

But Peter has always had a vocation for passing on acting skills - hence the screen acting masterclasses.

He explained: "GEM



**ABOVE: Peter with Fiona Johnson at the Marbella International Film Festival.**

readers have a chance of winning a scholarship by attending the GEM/Ferris Entertainment free masterclass on the January 18 from 2pm-5pm at Mount Sorrel Hotel, Porthkerry Road, Barry, CF62 7XY.

"All you have to do is bring along the voucher from the GEM.

"One male and one female will be chosen to win the three weekend masterclass scholarship being held one weekend a month in February, March and April.

"We are unique in that most screen acting masterclasses only teach you 'screen acting' but with the Ferris Entertainment

Screen Acting Masterclasses, the bonus is you also make a film which will be entered into international film festivals. It will get you an IMDB credit and then be shown on www.ferrisentertainment.tv."

It means those attending the classes learn to perform in front of the cameras.

Peter said: "Over the past 11 years people have attempted to compete with us and our style of courses, but we are never 'out innovated'."

Anyone over the age of 14, including adults, can attend. In the past, Peter has helped to retrain people for a career in the entertainment industry.

He added: "If you ever dreamed of a career in film and TV then take the first or the next step by coming along to the free masterclass."

"If you reach the required standard, you may be invited to join FEA Management, the Ferris agency which will put you forward to film and TV roles.

"We cannot thank the Glamorgan GEM enough for its support over the years, and we really look forward to meeting you at the free masterclass at Mount Sorrell hotel on January 18."

For any further information on the Wales' Masterclass and masterclasses held internationally visit [www.ferrisentertainment.com](http://www.ferrisentertainment.com) contact Ferris Entertainment on 07801 493 133, or via email [info@ferrisentertainment.com](mailto:info@ferrisentertainment.com)

# DAFYDD'S ENDURANCE TESTS RAISE £1,000 FOR CHARITY

**A DETERMINED  
Cancer Research  
Wales supporter  
from Bridgend,  
completed seven  
gruelling athletic  
challenges over the  
course of 2013, to  
raise £1,000 for the  
charity.**

Dafydd Owen (43) ran, swam, cycled and struggled almost 160km in a series of extreme races last year and the father of four said:

"Before this, the furthest I'd ever run was the Cardiff Half Marathon, and I only managed that once - but I'm never one to back away from a challenge!"

"Cancer has affected many of my family and friends, so I wanted to do something huge to raise as much money as possible for such a worthy cause."

On March 17, Dafydd took on the Rock Solid Race at Escot Park in Exeter. Within the 10km race format were 37 obstacles, from water and mud to eight foot walls and even fire.

Dafydd commented: "There was more mud than I ever want to see again. It was testing, but I passed!"

That challenge paled in comparison to the Fisherman's Friend Strongman Run on May 4, which saw Dafydd travel to Nürburg, Cologne. Described as 'the mother of all obstacle courses', the 22.5km route features ice pools, mud tunnels and electric fences.

Having completed the Strongman Run in three hours and 41 minutes, Dafydd commented: "I heard swear words from each of the 53 European nations represented; it was quite an education."

Dafydd undertook his first triathlon on May 19. The Llanelli Sprint Triathlon involves a 750m swim, 30km bike ride and 5km run, which Dafydd completed in just under two hours.

Dafydd said: "I'd never done a triathlon before; I don't even own a road bike!"

"It seemed to go on forever, but as I approached the finish line, I saw my wife and youngest kids, and my eight-year-old ran alongside me for the last 10 metres, which really spurred me on."

Then, on July 29,



**ABOVE: Dafydd during the Triathlon.**

Dafydd travelled to London for the world's biggest triathlon. In three hours and 22 minutes, he completed a 1.5km swim in the Royal Victoria Dock, a 40km cycle along the north bank of the Thames and a 10km run.

Dafydd commented: "I was so tired by the end that I'm not sure what happened - but I definitely finished. I have the photo to prove it."

His next race was the infamous Tough Mudder on September 21. Held at Glauk estate near Crickhowell in mid Wales, the relentless 19km course features 14 obstacles involving mud, 10ft walls, icy water and barbed wire.

Dafydd reported: "Some of the obstacles were really nasty. The Electric Eel dished out some strong shocks and the Mud Mile did what it said on the tin, but the worst for me was the Cage Crawl: a 60ft ditch filled with water, with mesh just a few inches above the surface."

Having only just recovered from this challenge, on September 29, Dafydd took on the Men's Health Survival of the Fittest race, a 10km urban assault course running right through Cardiff.

He said: "Survival of the Fittest was my first obstacle race back in 2010, and has a special place in my heart as a result. Compared to Tough Mudder or Strongman, it wasn't a huge physical test - the

obstacles are largely pedestrians and scaffolding as you run through the city!"

Dafydd completed his final challenge on December 15, when he took part in the annual Christmas Pudding Race in Bridgend.

The 10km multi-terrain run around Merthyr Mawr is the brainchild of former Olympic marathoner Steve Brace.

After an amazing year of athletic challenges and determined fundraising, Dafydd hit his £1,000 fundraising target and is planning to run the Snowdonia Marathon for Cancer Research Wales this year.

Cancer Research Wales fundraiser Mei Lewis said: "Sadly, as Dafydd has experienced, cancer affects so many people - not just the patient but their family and friends too."

"Thanks to amazing supporters like Dafydd and the generosity of his sponsors, we can fund groundbreaking, potentially life-saving research and work to reduce the impact of this terrible disease on everyone in Wales."

Cancer Research Wales would be grateful to anyone who would like to sponsor Dafydd's year-long fundraising effort.

Donations can be made online at <http://www.justgiving.com/DafyddOwen>.

To read more about Dafydd's journey, visit [knowingwhentolaugh.tumblr.com](http://knowingwhentolaugh.tumblr.com). **LF**

GEM ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

## In Business Update

**Don't be SAD,  
there are ways  
of banishing  
the winter blues!**

**TWENTY per cent of us in the UK suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) - likend to reduced sunlight over the winter months.**

It can make you want to retreat under the duvet. While most of us tire of the cold nights and grey days, SAD can cause extreme symptoms, such as weight change, low mood, apathy, comfort food craving, pessimism, aches and pains, disturbed sleep and lethargy.

But did you know 10-20 minutes daily cardiovascular exercise (a brisk walk) can help stave off SAD symptoms?

There's no need to join a gym - take the stairs, briskly walk with the children to school, or take the dog around the block, it all works fine!

Prevent cravings by balancing nutritionally

rich foods containing protein and healthy fats as well as your five a day.

Have a hug! Shortage of sunlight can cause serotonin to dip, so give your happy chemicals a boost with the 'cuddle hormone' oxytocin. This is released when we feel love, trust and understanding.

Take some time out for you! Time and energy spent on yourself can help improve self-esteem, confidence, energy levels and mood.

Create a positive habit! Harboured a negative outlook can increase chance of suffering SAD symptoms - so switch it around!

Hypnotherapy can help create positive habits relatively quickly, and so counteract the negative traits of SAD.

If you would like more information about Hypnotherapy, contact Sue Pitman on 07795 964066 or see website [www.cardiffhypnotherapysolutions.co.uk](http://www.cardiffhypnotherapysolutions.co.uk).

### CARDIFF HYPNOTHERAPY SOLUTIONS

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**The Business Centre, Barry.**

**Wellfield Osteopathic Clinic, Cardiff.**

[www.cardiffhypnotherapysolutions.com](http://www.cardiffhypnotherapysolutions.com)

## Get your bike fit for the New Year!

**I**f your New Year's resolution is to do more exercise, or to get out and about and see the lovely Vale - or even cycling to work - now is a great time to dust off that bike in the shed.

Unfortunately, most bikes after a lay-up will need a bit of TLC.

Vale Cycle Servicing has a full range of spares to return your trusty steed to the road - and with servicing from £30 and discounts for four or more bikes, why not give us a call on 07812033064?

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GEM ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



# In Business Update

## Prioritising key to coping with post-Christmas rental crisis

**J**ANUARY often leaves people in debt. It is frequently difficult to prioritise the debts that you should be paying first.

It's not always the company that shouts the loudest that should be paid first. A priority payment should always be your rent or mortgage payments to keep you and your family secure.

Landlords may not be receiving their rent and fall into arrears with mortgages of their own. What should you do if you can't pay your rent, or your tenant owes you money?

If you are a landlord, you should contact your tenant as soon as possible and establish if you can come to some sort of payment plan; if not, then you should consider serving a two-week notice.

## Plan ahead with PASSMORES...

**L**AWYERS around Wales and England are running a national 'Make a Lasting Power of Attorney' campaign to encourage all people to plan ahead to avoid problems if they later lose mental capacity.

It means making a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) on the new version of the forms, which came into force in October 2009.

A Lasting Power of Attorney is a legal document that enables one person to make decisions on behalf of another.

There are two types of LPA: financial and welfare. Financial LPAs enable a person to act on behalf of another if, for example, they are ill or disabled and cannot act for themselves.

A welfare LPA enables a person to act

on behalf of another if that person does not have the mental capacity to act for themselves, for example, in the case of a severe stroke.

Without an LPA, it may be necessary for family members to apply to the Court of Protection for authority. This can be a distressing and lengthy process and is far more expensive than making an LPA.

Once all parties have signed the LPA, they must then be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian before they can be used.

Carli Evans of Passmores Solicitors and a member of Solicitors for the Elderly is actively encouraging all people to plan ahead and make Lasting Powers of Attorneys.

People wishing to discuss their requirements should contact Carli Evans to arrange a suitable no obligation appointment on 01446 721000 or by email ce@passmores.com.

### PASSMORES

### MAKE AN LPA NOW

— Can you afford not to?

Can you imagine a situation where you or a member of your family is no longer able to make decisions? Frightening isn't it?

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a legal document, that enables one person to make decisions on behalf of another.

Carli Evans, a member of Solicitors for the Elderly is inviting you to attend a no obligation appointment to find out more.

For more information please call:  
Carli Evans on 01446 721000  
or by email ce@passmores.com.

**SOLICITORS FOR THE ELDERLY**

21 Tynwydd Road,  
Barry, CF62 8HB

If the arrears are not brought up to date after the two weeks, obtain a court order for possession and a judgement for your rent.

Tenants can obtain debt advice locally, or may have a counterclaim (e.g. late deposit registration, disrepair claims or incorrect documentation).

Newbold Solicitors are specialists in landlord and tenant issues; they have a free drop-in advice service and are happy to point you in the right direction.



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Newbold Solicitors are pleased to announce that we are running a legal surgery providing 80 minute appointments free of charge to help discuss any legal matters you may have and provide advice on how you should proceed with them.

The areas of law we can provide assistance in are:  
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**Tuesdays 17:00 - 18:30**  
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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FAMILY HELP

**H**OME START Bridgend is a family support charity, which recruits and trains volunteers to help families with children.

Families might be finding it hard to cope for a variety of reasons, illness, disability, post natal depression, mental health problems, isolation, bereavement multiple births or just loneliness.

As a volunteer, you would visit the family once a week for a couple of hours, usually in their own homes. They might just need someone to talk to, or more practical support like meal planning, budgeting or help with finding out about local services such as playgroups.

The only qualifications we require are experience of bringing up children, a friendly caring attitude, understand the pressures of parenting and a non-judgemental attitude.

What will you get from volunteering?

A highly-rated preparation course, a boost to your self-esteem and confidence, or even a foot on the ladder towards a future career.



**Are you a Parent or GrandParent? Do you have 3 hours a week to spare?**

**Become A Home-Start Volunteer and help a local family**

Home-Start volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to families, providing a life-line for parents finding it hard to cope.

We will provide free training and regular support... and you could use your new and existing skills to make a difference to a local family.

**Volunteer training starts in February 2014**

For further information, please contact Jackie on 01656 668111 or email: [homestartbridgel@btconnect.com](mailto:homestartbridgel@btconnect.com)

Home-Start will undertake an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check on all potential volunteers.  
Registered Charity No. 1167574; Company No. 5258533.

## Classic double bill at Llanrcarfarn cinema!

**L**LANRCARFARN Community Cinema is bringing two classic Gothic chillers to the big screen on Friday, January 24, as part of a nationwide season.

The double bill begins with Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940, PG), starring Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine, followed by Stanley Kubrick's haunting masterpiece *The Shining* (1980, 15).

Made 40 years apart, the films share intriguing parallels. Both were directed by ex-pats (Hitchcock made *Rebecca* on first arriving in the US, while Kubrick, a New Yorker, had settled in Britain when he shot *The Shining*).

The films are based on popular novels (by Daphne du Maurier and Stephen King) and both centre their stories on a classic, isolated 'haunted house'.

"This is a unique opportunity to see these great works on the big screen, in historic surroundings," says cinema volunteer Jim Barratt.

"We're debuting our huge new screen and high-definition projector, to deliver the best presentation possible."



**LLANRCARFARN COMMUNITY CINEMA**  
presents a unique  
**GOTHIC DOUBLE BILL**  
**FRIDAY 24 JANUARY**

Alfred Hitchcock's *REBECCA* (1940, PG)  
starring Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine  
Doors 6-4.5pm  
Film 7.00pm

Stanley Kubrick's *THE SHINING* (1980, 15)  
starring Jack Nicholson and Shelley Long  
Doors 9-4.5pm  
Film 7.00pm

\*To be confirmed

£4.50 one film (£2 members)  
£7.00 two films (£3 members)  
Call to book: 01446 781144  
Email: [llanrcarfarncinema@gmail.com](mailto:llanrcarfarncinema@gmail.com)

Llanrcarfarn Village Hall  
CF62 3AD  
[www.llanrcarfarncinema.co.uk](http://www.llanrcarfarncinema.co.uk)

## 'Desperately needing new homes...

**M**AESTEG Animal Welfare Society needs your help to rehome cats.

In 1985, three people in Maesteg wanted to improve animal welfare and so Maesteg Animal Welfare Society (MAWS) was born.

MAWS is a small charity run entirely by volunteers – most funds are generated from our charity shop in 4, Church Street, Maesteg. Please come to see us if you are in the area (opposite the bus station).

Currently, we have an abundance of cats who are desperately in need of a new family or individual to care for them. We rehome many cats and dogs throughout the valleys, Bridgend and the Vale, and we are desperate for new homes.

We have had to introduce a waiting list before we can take in any more.

Please contact 01656 721496 or 01656 653456 if you can offer a home or any donations, bric-a-brac or any unwanted items.



**MAESTEG ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY**  
**Kittens, young and older cats – All needing a new family!**  
All cats have been neutered & microchipped  
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[www.maesteganimalrescue.co.uk](http://www.maesteganimalrescue.co.uk)  
Thanking everyone for their continued support

## Cinema returns to St Donats

**WE'RE delighted to announce that cinema is returning to St Donats Arts Centre in 2014, with matinee and evening screenings once a month in the Tythe Barn.**

The cinema will offer the very latest in digital projection to screen a carefully selected and varied programme of current and classic quality films, including Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln*, showing on Monday, January 27 at 2pm.

Further cinema listings can be found on our website [www.stdonats.com](http://www.stdonats.com). Ticket prices are £4.50 for advance sales and £5.50 on the day.

This project has received funding through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 – 2013 which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The funding is administered by Creative Rural Communities, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Rural Regeneration initiative.



**ST-DONATS ARTS CENTRE**

**CINEMA returns to St Donats!**  
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# 'Pioneer of Welsh showmen'

## How Bavaria's Studt family brought fun and entertainment to the people of south Wales

**MEMBERS of the Studt family returned to Barry after a break of over 100 years – in 2010 a number of rides were opened by Vernon Studt on the fairground site.**

In the 1800s the Studts came from Bavaria and on arrival in south Wales became horse dealers and later moved from that into the showground business.

Jacob Studt came to Barry and opened a small fairground on the old showground in Holton Road.

It included a motor car scenic railway. A 'scenic railway' was a ride with painted backdrops.

Jacob was one of three brothers (John and Henry were the other two).

Late in the 1880s, he opened one of the first fairgrounds on the sands at Barry Island, it comprised two small roundabouts and a miniature railway.

The Studts returned to the Island on more than four occasions from 1889, and were

joined on the sands by John White, who brought his 'swing boats' from Cardiff, and who later took over the lease of the fairground on the Island, moving from there to Cosy Corner in the late 1920s on the takeover of his lease by Pat Collins.

**'AMY EVANS'**  
Over the years both the Studt and White families were very generous to local charities, on one occasion the Studts gave half of a weekend's takings (not the profit) to aid the Amy Evans Hospital in Barry.

In 1897 Jacob, who was at the Newport showground, gave the whole of the week's takings from the fair – which included steam horses and switchback rides – to the Newport Hospital appeal fund, in exchange for the use of a piece of land owned by Lord Tredegar in Alexandra Road, which would be used by him as a showground.

Jacob travelled all over the country with his shows and appeared at regular intervals at the Hereford May Fair, Gloucester Barton Fair, in Basingstoke, Salisbury, Poole, Bournemouth and at

**by TOM CLEMETT**

Oxford St Giles Fair, where in 1908 he brought his switchback ride and gallopers.

The Studts took their shows to places nearer to home with a great many in Glamorgan.

One was held for a number of years at the Hayes in Cardiff and others were held in the surrounding areas – at the Easter Fair in Pontypridd, the Neath 'Bird in the Hand' fairground, the Bear Inn Field at Cowbridge, the field opposite the old bus station at Talbot Green, and in Pontycymmer.

Some of the family finally settled in Pontyclun.

In 1889, Jacob, who was then based in Maesteg, came back to Barry with his Royal Bioscope show.

It was an 'electric picture show' and complete with stage acts and hand coloured slides which were produced in France.

### PIONEER

The show was a two-wagoned fronted show, with an 89 Key Gavioli organ and – and some-

thing that was a complete innovation to the residents of Barry – an electric portable lighting set!

In the same year, he was made a vice president of The Showman's Guild of south Wales and Northern Ireland, and in 1936, in a tribute to his work for that organisation, he was described as 'The Pioneer of Welsh Showmen'.

In 1889, he acquired one of the first engines made by Charles Burrell and Sons, Ltd., No 1451 'The Monarch', which in 1901 was replaced by 'General Buller', a Fowler traction engine capable of generating electricity.

Four years later, he sold this engine to Marshall's and replaced it with two brand new Fowler engines 'Queen Alexandra' and 'Emperor' – later renamed 'King Edward'.

Jacob's wife was the sister of John Johnson who ran the Prince of Wales Theatre in Penarth and who later came to Barry and opened the Princess Theatre in Cadoxton.

When that theatre was destroyed by fire in the late 1880s, he opened the first theatre in Barry Dock (Johnson's Victoria Theatre) in Holton Road.

This was on ground which became known as the Victoria Field, and was on the site of what was to become the Victoria Hotel (now Tesco's).

**White's Cosy Corner**  
Another link with Barry fairground families was Billy Reohorn who was Jacob Studt's cousin and worked for the Studt family running their half-penny rock stall.

Another member of the Reohorn family married Alice Maud White and had seven children, the last of whom (Jack) ran White's Cosy Corner on the Island until a fire destroyed the fair, which had occupied the site since the 1920s.

In 1915, Henry Studt's 'living vans' were taken over by the war department for use as recruiting centres.

Henry, who had a zoological ride containing horses, ostriches and cockerels, sold it in the early 1930s to White Bros, who used it at Cosy Corner for a few years and later sold to Butlin's.

On later visits to Barry, Jacob Studt had transformed the two wagoned fronted show into an organ fronted

one with a 110 Key Gavioli with the living wagons stationed at each end.

The following year he replaced the 110 Key Gavioli with a 112 Keyless Organ, which was surrounded by a mass of carved figures covered in gold leaf made by craftsmen from the Black Forest area of Germany.

To further add to its attraction, he commissioned four very large columns surmounted with elaborate carved Corinthian capitals.

### BIOSCOPE

Whenever his show was in opposition with other big shows, Jacob always came up with an added attraction; at one time he hired the chorus line from a London theatre to parade at the front of his show.

When his Bioscope shows were superseded by the cinema, he proceeded to open a number of cinemas in south Wales.

I believe that the first was next to the Windsor Arms in Pontyclun, which was later closed and replaced by one in Cowbridge Road, and the other two were at Llanharan and Pencoe.

The management of the cinemas was entrusted to his grandson Philip Phillips; he then stopped travelling and his son, John J. Studt took over a number of the family's pitches and used the organ for his rides.

The Studt family were one of the founder members of the South Wales Stallholders and Showman's Protection Association, which fought for fair rents and terms for pitches across south Wales and for a number of years Margaret Deakin Studt was its secretary.

## 'Stay booze-free for a month' CHALLENGE

**THE Safer Vale Partnership is supporting Alcohol Concern's 'Dry January' – challenging people to stay booze-free for 31 days.**

It says the benefits of giving up alcohol for a short period include: improved sleep; feel better; losing weight; improved skin and hair quality; and saving money.

A spokesperson for the charity said: "We are absolutely clear that this

# The Mandela biopic is moving and powerful

**THE life of Nelson Mandela is one that encompassed so many facets, from aspiring lawyer to a freedom fighter, a prisoner who became a national, and even global, icon.**

While films like *Invictus* and *Goodbye Bafana* have told sections of the great man's life, no film has ever tried telling the whole story, something that hits cinema screens in *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*.

Played by Idris Elba, the film details Mandela's journey, a life that saw much drama, conflict, and change both in the life of Mandela and South Africa...

The sad passing of Nelson Mandela late last year grants

*Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* a sombre note, the film looking back over a life that encompassed many facets.

Certainly, the film does the subject matter proud, presenting a rounded portrait of a man whose years on this earth were surrounded by controversy and then adoration, a symbol and figurehead for change.

Using the titular biography for inspiration, the film stays close to reality, and while emphasising Mandela's achievements, also presents the evidence that for all the good he did, there were also elements of his life that were perhaps not so praiseworthy.

While it would be counter-productive to have played these elements up in the face of the overwhelming good he did, it would have certainly made for an



**by GARETH JAMIESON**  
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

even more intriguing film if things such as the ANC's use of terrorism (and Mandela's advocacy of it), had been tackled with a little more ferocity by the filmmakers, rather than passed off so simply here as a louder response to the government; the question of whether the ends justify the means so pertinent, but passed over.

The early parts of Mandela's life give the film a slow start but as tensions rise in South Africa, and he becomes more involved in trying to make a change, the film slowly starts taking shape, always flickering but never really truly igniting.

There are moments that thrill (the black population taking over a European-only train platform) and chill (the constant threat of violence and persecution, never more sadly realised than the Sharpeville massacre) but while it impresses and informs, you just want that one moment to really jump up and grab you – but it never seems to come.

The real joy of the film comes in the performances, with Idris Elba very good in the

lead role. An imposing presence on screen, Elba goes through the stages of Mandela's life and captures the characteristic nuances and speech patterns without ever resorting to impersonation.

As Mandela grows older, so Elba's turn grows, the mature wisdom of the man comfortably essayed by the actor, and even if by the end he resembles a muscular Desmond Tutu, it takes nothing away from an impressive turn.

As Winnie Mandela, Naomie Harris is equally as good, the actress showing expertly how events conspired to turn her from a timid housewife into a ferocious political animal, her actions given credence and weight by the troubles she had to endure, both through the actions of the government and also by the sacrifices needed to be made due to her husband's actions.

Even at 146 minutes, the story does move a little too quickly, skimming over events that deserve a film in their own right, but given the subject matter it can't be helped; as a piece of work on the life of a true icon, however, *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* is a powerful film – it just lacks that one real moment of impact to truly hit home.

**VERDICT** - A pair of excellent lead turns by Idris Elba and Naomie Harris make it a powerful piece of work, capturing the life of an iconic man. The story does move a little too swiftly but it is an impressive and moving film. Recommended.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *The Butler* (2013), *Invictus* (2009).

## News from Penarth Computer Club

### SAD FAREWELLS

**WE have had to say a sad farewell to one of our long-standing members, Wally Davies, who passed away in December.**

He was a cheerful chap with a fine sense of fun; a good friend, photographer and a long-time supporter of Scouting, as well as serving for several years on our club's committee.

Now we have to say farewell to another friend, Ron Price, who passed away on New Year's Day after a lengthy decline following a stroke. He was a quieter, more serious man, but appreciated a joke.

He also served on our committee, as well as volunteering for tea-making duties at our meetings. A gentle man and a gentleman – another good friend.

They both took on roles that helped other people and will be missed.

### Hello to the New Year...

The last meeting of the old year was our chips and chat night with a quiz. It hit a snag when Mike J was indisposed and couldn't do his usual quiz. Kevin S bravely stood in at very short notice and devised a quiz in his own style. Brains, therefore, had to be engaged before the food was provided and the normal feasting proceeded.

The first meeting of the New Year is always our AGM to put to bed the finances and reports of the last year, and to make sure that we have someone to take the blame if anything goes wrong in the next 12 months.

After establishing the committee, we have a chat about what members

would like to hear about at the meetings. We have been trying hard recently to get more interaction between the speaker and the audience and are encouraged by the progress so far.

Even if you are terrified of technology, there is no reason to be afraid of us. We pride ourselves on being a friendly club.

We stress that we are not a bunch of computer experts and that we meet to help each other, share experiences and problems and provide support for new users who are struggling.

Our programme is designed to help members solve problems; provide general hints and tips; run question and answer sessions; get speakers to talk about topics of general interest to members.

Questions are encouraged during the talks. Mike J insists that there is no such thing as a stupid question, and any question is acceptable if someone genuinely wants it answered. If we cannot answer it we will say so, and try to find one.

If you have acquired a computer for Christmas and don't know how to get on with it, we should be able to help and will be pleased to have a go.

Come along and try us out. We learn and have fun.

*Our next meeting is our (free) AGM on Tuesday, January 14 at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth, 7.30pm for 8pm; reports, election of officers and a discussion about programme topics. Visitors always welcome.*

**HOWARD DESMOND**

## Can I thank you personally, please?

**I WENT for a walk this morning around Barry Island and lost my car keys.**

After turning my clothing/camera bag inside out I realised they weren't in my possession and decided to retrace my steps.

I then saw a note on the windscreen which, basically, said: 'found your keys, waited for 10 minutes then took them to Marco's Cafe'. Had a 'rogue' found the keys, I dread to think what could have happened.

The finder didn't leave any details at Marco's, but I hope they will contact me on 07870815176 so that I can thank them personally.

**Mike Gallagher, Barry.**

**Did you know you can find The Glamorgan GEM on Twitter? Follow us @gem\_news**



# Vale greengrocer is on the fight back after record-breaking surgery

ONE of the best-known faces on Cowbridge High Street is recovering after undergoing major surgery – a series of three long operations totalling 38 hours.

Amazingly, Paul Preece, who runs the Strawberry Fields fruit and veg shop at Penny Lane with his son Joel, had no idea of his medical situation – and it was only discovered after he pulled a muscle playing squash!

Paul's wife, Sheryl, who runs the sweet shop 'Sweet Occasions' – also in Penny Lane – told The GEM how the family were given the shock news last July.

She said: "Paul went to see his chiropractor after pulling a muscle in his back, who was concerned about a small

lump on his lower back. "I had noticed it, but it seemed very minor, and Paul was getting absolutely no pain at all."

However, he took the chiropractor's advice, and his doctor immediately sent him to a specialist. Things happened very rapidly then.

Sheryl said: "Paul was examined at the University Hospital of Wales, and they discovered a huge tumour that was wrapped around his spine."

"They said it was so unusual that Paul would need to be treated at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, the leading specialist hospital in this field."

The doctors at John Radcliffe spent some time assessing Paul's condition. It was rare. In fact, they had performed only 45 similar

## REPORT by PHILIP IRWIN

operations all year.

Planning the operation was a huge task, and they decided that a rib would need to be removed, together with a bone in his leg, to rebuild his pelvis.

When they set to work, it was a record-breaking operation.

Sheryl explained: "Paul had three operations on three successive days – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday."

"The Monday operation was 10 hours long, and so was the Tuesday one. Then, on the Wednesday, Paul was in theatre for 18 hours!"

"When it was finally over, the doctors said that it was the biggest operation of its type that they had ever performed. He was quite a celebrity!"

Even now, it seems amazing that Paul could have been unaware of the tumour. It was, say the doctors, as big as a melon.

She continued: "Paul has always kept fit. He played professional football for Bristol Rovers and then Newport County, and also played on for Welsh league clubs."

"He was on the go all day in the business, leaving the house at 4.30am to collect crates from the wholesalers, doing a full day's work, and then playing squash two or three times a week."

The doctors told

Sheryl that being such a fit 56-year-old had made a huge difference. They could not have attempted such a gruelling operation on a patient who was less fit and healthy.

Sadly, Paul has had to pay a price for the life-saving surgery. Sheryl said: "The doctors told Paul that some nerve damage was unavoidable, and he was resigned, even before going into theatre, to the knowledge that his right foot would be 'floppy', and he will walk with a limp."

"Also, as they had to remove muscle, as well as the tumour, he needs a great deal of physiotherapy to help him recover."

Ironically, after the brilliant skills shown by the surgeons, this period of recuperation is proving the most frustrating. Paul was told that he needs to be in a specialist rehab centre such as Rookwood in Cardiff, but there are no spare beds.

This means that Paul has been 'stuck' in the University Hospital of Wales – not getting the physio that he needs.

Sheryl said: "The University Hospital does have a hydrotherapy pool, but it is only for the use of outpatients!"

"The physio staff there are really good, and they do their best,

but Paul should be in Rookwood."

In the meantime, Sheryl says that Paul's competitive spirit is showing, and he is determined to recover at a quicker rate than his doctors say he can.

Sheryl said: "He is doing exercises and lifting weights in bed, and asks for as much physio as possible. He had made enough progress to be let out for a day and spent Christmas Day at home."

In all, Paul spent 11 weeks in the John Radcliffe, and Sheryl was there for almost all of that period, staying in local hotels.

Now he is in Cardiff, she spends a great deal of time at his bedside, so the other family members have had to step up and keep the businesses running.

Joel and his sister Stacey are running Strawberry Fields, while Stacey, along with members of staff, is running Sweet Occasions when her mother is in Cardiff.

One thing that has kept them all going has been the good wishes and support of customers. Sheryl said:

"We have been inundated with get well cards, and people are always calling in to wish Paul well. Some customers have even called in to see him in hospital."

Sheryl and Paul met when she was 16, and

seven years later they were married. This year, their 34th year as a married couple, has been very different, and the whole family has had to pull together.

However, Sheryl says that Paul is determined to make as full a recovery as possible – and there will be no shortage of customers waiting to welcome him back!



ABOVE:  
Paul Preece (left) and his son Joel.

## SPOOKY TALES WITH HAYLEY WILLIAMS

### January a devastating month through the ages

THE month of January (Ianuarus in Latin, Ionawr in Welsh) is named after the god Janus, of Roman mythology, and means door – as the month is the doorway to the New Year.

Its birthstone is the garnet, and its flowers Dianthus caryophyllus or galanthus. The Anglo-Saxons called this winter month wulf-monath, meaning wolf month, or wintermanoth (winter/cold month).

The observation of New Year on January 1 dates back to 153 BC, during the rule of the Romans. Before this celebrated date was set, March 25 was considered to be the beginning of the new year; but it was not until 1752 that Britain adopted January 1 for New Year's Day because it was calculated as the first month on the Gregorian calendar, named after Pope Gregory.

This date was considered to be lucky because the full moon on that night would bring hope for the year ahead.

January 2, through an Old Saxon belief, was one of the unluckiest days of the year; although no real proof stating why seems to have survived. If a baby was born on this day, death was said to be unpleasant.

January 6 marks the end of the Christmas festival. It is appropriately named Twelfth Night because it brings a close to the 12 days of the festive period.

It is the date of the Epiphany on the Christian calendar, a night when the Three Wise Men (or Kings) visited baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

Not to be confused with Shakespeare's comedy play of the same name (a piece that I studied for both O-Level and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) Twelfth Night has been celebrated over the course of time by many different traditions. But in most cultures it was a joyous occasion overflowing with food, drink, and merrymaking.

Superstition stated that all yuletide trees and colourful decorations must be dismantled and put away before January 6, as it was deemed to be unlucky. Failure to obey the custom would bring misfortune and disaster into the lives of the defiant.

The 13th is the feast day of St Hilary, a Catholic bishop born on this date in 368 AD. It is said to be the coldest day of the year, as wintry events of frost, ice and snow from our past have been recorded to begin on this day.

The earliest recognition of such events on January 13 date back to 1205, when the River Thames froze over, and ale and wine turned to solid ice due to the sub-zero temperatures.

An extract from Stowe's Chronicle states: 'So began a frost which contin-

ued 'til 2nd and 12th day of March, so that the ground could not be tilled.'

In the month of January, between 1550 and 1750, Frost Fairs were held. The occasion had tents, sideshows, food stalls and ice bowling. These festivals took place upon frozen rivers, lakes and ponds and lasted for the duration of four days.

January 20 is superficially St Agnes' Eve when unmarried maidens and girls would perform rituals before going to bed. They would wish for dreams about future husbands by reciting The Lord's Prayer, fasting all day and finally retiring to bed by walking up the staircase backwards.

'The Eve of St Agnes' is an 1820 poem by John Keats:  
'Ah, bitter chill it was! The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold;

Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told,

His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,

Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death.

Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.'

This usually coincided with the first new moon of the year. An unwashed silk handkerchief was held up and used to stare at the moon.

It was believed that the number of moons that could be seen through the handkerchief revealed the number of years until the maiden would be married.

On viewing the moon in this way, a chant was recited: 'All hail to thee moon, all hail to thee. I prythee, good moon, reveal to me this night who my husband shall be.'

Historical events which happened throughout January include:

January 2, 1770 an enormous Christmas pie was baked: it consisted of two bushels (measures) of flour, 20lbs butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, two woodcocks, six snipe, four partridges, two neat's tongues, two curlews, two blackbirds and six pigeons. Weighing 12 stone, it would be large enough to feed the people for weeks!

On January 17, 1912, Robert Scott and his party reached the South Pole, and on the 29th in 1856 the Victoria Cross originated. The medals were actually made from the metal of guns captured during the Crimean War.

With its unusual traditions and superstitions coming to light from ancient times, it seems that January had a devastating effect upon folk from all walks of life.

hayley.williams550@yahoo.com

## News update from Vale Lions Club

FOLLOWING a very successful year for Llantwit Major and Cowbridge Lions' fundraising activities, the club is pleased to announce donations to the following organisations.

The recent Cowbridge Reindeer parade raised about £1,350 and as is customary, this money is shared out to local organisations.

In this year, the following organisations have been selected: Barnardo's Cymru (Cowbridge helpers); Cowbridge Rotary Club; Vale Big Wrap; Age Concern (Llantwit Major) for Christmas hampers; and the Cowbridge Gateway Monday Club.

In addition, the following have also benefited by donations from other fundraising activities: LCIF (Lions Clubs International Foundation) for world-wide disaster relief, Lions Sight First for pre-

vention of blindness, The Salvation Army Christmas appeal and Samaritans (Bridgend branch).

Llantwit Major and Cowbridge Lions Club would like to thank all who have made this possible by attending our events and also helping out at those events.

The club is now hoping to build on the successes of 2013 and carry this momentum forward into 2014 with the usual mix of events, plus a few new ones, to keep up the interest in the club's activities.

If you would like to know more about Lions with a view to joining or helping out at an event, you can visit the website at [lmandclions.org.uk](http://lmandclions.org.uk), email [info@lmandclions.org.uk](mailto:info@lmandclions.org.uk), or call 0845 833 6763.

The club is open to both male and female members, age 18 years and above.

DAVE EDWARDS

## THE WOMEN WHO TOOK TO THE AIR

WOMEN have played a big part in aviation: 'Lady aviators and their contribution to aviation' will be the subject of a talk by David Ephraim at the next meeting of Penarth Aviation Society this Friday (January 10). Most of the women in David Ephraim's talk brought glamour and excitement to flying but some, like Hanna Reitsch, a Nazi who flew for Hitler, did not.

The PAS meeting will be held at Penarth Conservative Club at 8pm and visitors are welcome. Further information on 01446 721321.

YT

## Tory AMs oppose wind turbine plan

TWO Conservative regional AMs are objecting to plans to build a wind turbine on land at Stormy Down.

Suzi Davies and Byron Davies (South Wales West) say they are contacting Bridgend planners to oppose the application from Cenin, which would see a turbine constructed at the old Stormy Down airfield site.

The turbine, which will be about 340 feet high, will replace a water tower on the site, which is less than 60 feet in height.

Local resident Colin Ball, who contacted the two AMs, said that villagers at Stormy would be less than 500 yards away from the turbine.

Both AMs objected to plans to place two turbines on land at nearby Newton Down last year and the plan was turned

down by Bridgend planners – but a Welsh Government planning inspector overturned that decision on appeal and granted permission.

Suzi Davies said: "This land is already 300 feet above sea level so a 340 foot high turbine would be visible for miles around."

"As Shadow tourism minister, I am concerned about the detrimental impact this will have on sensitive areas like the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, Merthyr Mawr dunes, as well as Porthcawl itself with its important tourism industry."

"The cumulative impact of allowing another turbine, in addition to the two already permitted, could be devastating."

Byron Davies said: "In my view, BCBC were right to refuse the previous application at Newton Down because

this whole area is outside the Tan 8 area designated for windfarms."

"What is the point of the Welsh Government drawing up guidance for planners if one of their own inspectors then drives a horse and cart through it?"

"I met residents of this tiny hamlet last year and I am fearful of the impact on their community if another turbine is permitted."

"These are monsters which will totally dominate the landscape and will have a huge, overpowering effect on residents."

Suzi Davies added: "BCBC seems to be reacting to applications of this nature as they come in."

"I would be happier if they had a strategy of their own for dealing with cases of this type."



# Vale Council hands road safety awards to its dedicated school crossing patrols



**School Crossing Patrols (SCPs) and volunteers involved with the child pedestrian training scheme Kerbcraft in Vale Primary Schools, were honoured recently with Vale Council Road Safety awards at a presentation.**

Rob Thomas, Vale director of development services, said: "The success of any scheme relies upon the dedication and commitment of the individuals involved, be it on a voluntary basis or in a paid role. To remain enthusiastic and continue to smile while standing in the pouring rain takes a very dedicated individual."

He paid tribute to over 200 Kerbcraft volunteers who have freely given up their time since 2002 to step up to the challenge of helping prepare young road users to be safe pedestrians. Those first five and six year-old pupils who were trained 11 years ago may soon be leaving school and applying for their driving licenses!

Since Kerbcraft started in Wales, child pedestrian training had involved nearly 5,000 children in the Vale of Glamorgan alone. Several awards were presented to volunteers from School Crossing Patrols and Kerbcraft, whose efforts were particularly appreciated over the past twelve months.

Rob Thomas said: "Our heartfelt thanks goes to everyone who has taken part in Kerbcraft training this year and we hope that, with sustained funding, it will continue for many years to come".

Everyone took part in a light-hearted quiz to test their knowledge of 1953 (the year that the School Crossing Patrol Act was passed by Parliament), followed by the serving of light refreshments. The event was hosted once again by the Vale Council Road Safety Team.

## Area winners, Llantwit Major and rural Vale:

Alison Richardson from Eagleswell Primary School plays many active roles within the school community, both inside and outside, and has supported and encouraged the school junior road safety officers (JRSOs) to spread the road safety message to both parents and pupils alike.

## Barry:

Barrie Evans, a mobile patrol officer for the past year, started outside St Helen's Junior School over three years ago and is currently covering Rhws Primary School. A very popular and reliable officer!

## Penarth, Sully and Dinas Powys:

Elaine Storey supports pupils to cross the road from a variety of schools in Penarth on Redlands Road. With over 13 years of service to her name, she has always been creative and innovative with ideas to support her role, visiting schools and rewarding positive behaviour for those who cross with her. Sadly she will be leaving her post after Christmas and will be missed by everyone!

A special award was presented to Karin Williams who, while patrolling outside Rhws Primary School on June 20, was involved in a 'freak' incident

when a car flipped over and mounted the kerb where she and a group of children and parents were standing.

Protecting the children, Karin took the full force of the impact and sustained very serious injuries.

Onlookers said that several children could have died or would have had far worse injuries if it had not been for Karin's courageous and brave reactions.

Nominated and deservedly winning a 'Pride of Britain' Award, Karin is making a remarkable recovery and was there to receive her SCP Special Award from Coun Lis Burnett, Vale of Glamorgan Council cabinet member for regeneration, innovation, planning and transportation.

**School Crossing Patrol of the Year:**  
A stalwart of the SCP service since 1998 and 'ambassador' for all school crossing patrols, Jean Hatter can be relied upon to cover all sites and undertake training or provide support.

Popular with fellow officers and the public alike, and always showing the utmost dedication and commitment to her work, this year probably proved to be her most challenging. On the afternoon of the accident at Rhws, the crossing point needed to be covered and this lady was sent to do the job!

She managed to remain calm, despite everything going on around her, and used her experience to ensure the safety of everyone crossing with her.

Over the following weeks her manner and continuing professionalism helped to relieve the anxiety of the children and parents attending Rhws School and restore their confidence, once again, in using this school crossing patrol point.

A lady who always carries out her job to the best of her ability and fully deserves the title and famous SCP shield!

## Kerbcraft:

A random draw was made of all the volunteers' names, many of whom have been involved with the scheme for a number of years.

The winners, chosen to represent every person who freely gives up their time to help the children, were: Joanna Hopkins and Lisa Guy who, coincidentally, are both dedicated volunteers at Rhws Primary School.

## Competition winners:

Presentations were also made to the winners of the Road Safety Competitions held during 2013. These were:

**School Crossing Patrol Diamond Anniversary Banner competition** – Seren Russell (winner, Ysgol Pen y Garth); Rosa Davies (runner-up, Ysgol Bro Morganwg); Lewys Williams (runner-up, Ysgol Bro Morganwg).

**Drink-Drive Multimedia competition** – the winning DVD was produced by three students from year-8 at Cowbridge Comprehensive School: Helen Jenkins, Freya Evans and Francesca Weir.

**Drink-Drive Poster Competition** – Freya Large (winner, Peterston-super-Ely Primary School); runners-up Finn Martin-Jones, Daisy Martin-Jones and Livvy Cross (all PSE).

**Runners-up**, Erin Evans and Phoebe-Mai Bagshaw (both Murch Junior School).

**ABOVE: Helen Jenkins, Freya Evans and Francesca Weir, Cowbridge Comprehensive.**

**BELOW: Jean Hatter, with the SCP Shield.**



Karin Williams with Coun Lis Burnett.



Barrie Evans, for St Helen's Junior School.



ABOVE: The Drink-Drive competition winners.



ABOVE: Alison Richardson, for Eagleswell Primary School.



ABOVE: Joanna Hopkins and Lisa Guy.



ABOVE: The school crossing patrol competition winners.



Elaine Storey, for Penarth.



# High tides on the Heritage Coast being monitored by Vale Council



Photographers Lauren Yeoman and Glyn Evans recorded images of the high tides in recent days, Lauren in Barry, Glyn (see below) in Penarth.

Although the sea has breached walls on the Heritage Coast, there has been no significant property flooding.

The council says its coastal and flood risk management section is still continuing to monitor the situation.

PHOTOGRAPHS by LAUREN YEOMAN



ABOVE: High tide on Monday in Penarth. PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

## Desert Divas' treat in store for shoppers



ABOVE: The Desert Divas, with Mark and Carl (The Jensen Effect) at Waitrose

LOCAL Middle Eastern dance troupe, the Desert Divas, rounded off another successful year with a surprise performance for shoppers at Waitrose in Barry recently, when local musicians The Jensen Effect promoted their new charity single, *All Across the Land*, in store.

Their year has seen the ladies perform at a variety of venues across south Wales, including the Wales Millennium Centre, taking part in the Barry Arts Festival Parade through the town in May, a return visit to the Llandough fete in June and the Barry Friendship Festival in July.

They danced at various 'haflas' (get-togethers) around the region, such as Bollywood Bling in Cardiff and the Hot! Hot! Hot! Charity Hafla in Pencoed and have performed at numerous birthdays, social and charity events throughout the year.

The involvement with The Jensen Effect began when the Divas were invited to dance at a party at Ty Hapus, the centre for younger dementia sufferers in Barry.

One of the dancers, Andy, sings in Vale Voices, one of the choirs that sang on *All Across the Land* and took it to the group, suggesting that they could devise a choreography to perform at Ty Hapus.

Carl and Mark were delighted and invited the Divas to give a repeat performance at Waitrose in Cowbridge on Saturday, January 25.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the group, which formed after meeting at an adult education class in Barry in 2003, and plans are taking shape to celebrate with a spectacular show at Barry Memo on September 20.

Past members who would like to be involved in any capacity are invited to get in touch, or come along to one of our Tuesday evening sessions in Dinas Powys.

The Desert Divas can be contacted by phoning Sue on 07787510608. AG

## SEASONAL WALKS IN THE RAIN with Penarth and District Ramblers

AS the unseasonal weather continued, and in sunshine spiced with some heavy downpours of rain, two more walks in the Ramblers' annual Festival of Winter Walks took place.

Before the end of 2013, six walkers joined Joy, Bracken and Bronte at Cosmeston and set off in rainfall up through the estate to join the Wales Coast Path and the skies cleared, rain stopped and reaching Lavernock Point, a muddy, wet, slippery path took them onto Lavernock beach.

Reaching the shelter of St Marys Well Bay, quick refreshments were enjoyed before joining the road near The Bay Caravan Park.

Re-joining the Wales Coast Path, muddy path edges around ploughed meadows led to the delightful Lavernock Nature Reserve, which contains the remains of a Second World War anti-aircraft battery.

Fort Road led back to Cosmeston Country Park and more thick squelching mud at Cogan Wood, before their return to the medieval village to learn some of the history of the 14th century, which made a very pleasant way to round off the walk.

Thirteen keen walkers braved the elements on the second day of 2014, setting off in high spirits with William to enjoy a circular walk including lunch at the Blue Anchor in East Aberthaw, which

is fast becoming an annual treat! Joining the Wales Coast Path and crossing part of the pebble beach to avoid a flooded area, a sudden shower led to one of the party taking a tumble, but after first aid they were able to continue.

Climbing to the Bulwarks and passing through Porthkerry Caravan Park, then the Rhose Point quarries, thick wet mud was the order of the day as well as deep puddles on the path which made the going difficult in places.

From Fontygary, cliff

steps led them down to Pleasant Harbour and past the old ruined lime works, originally marshy ground where the river Thaw ran towards the sea before it was re-routed when Aberthaw Power Station was built.

Then it was from Well Road up to the Blue Anchor, where boots and muddy outer clothing were hastily removed, before a well-deserved and pleasant luncheon in the warmth of the pub.

Their return in bright sunshine was made via Port Road then Nurston and through Rhose village walking around the airport bend to drop downhill past the Old Rectory and the tall viaduct.

On January 12, meet at 9am at the Barry Waterfront for a 9.5-mile moderate walk at Porthcawl and Kenfig; contact Joy on 01446 737131.

On January 14, the midweek walk will leave Cogan Leisure Centre at 9am for an 8-mile walk taking in Clifton Suspension Bridge and Avon Gorge; contact William on 01446 747239. JS

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# Glamorgan Hunt sets out from Cowbridge on New Year's Day



PHOTOS  
by  
MIKE  
WILCOCK

## Beware bogus 'bank telephone callers' – WARNING

South Wales Police are warning members of the public not to be fooled by telephone callers seeking to obtain bank details.

The warning follows an incident which took place very recently when an elderly woman received a call from a man purporting to be a police officer who had someone in custody with her bank details and asked for this information to check them back.

Detective Sergeant Claire Huish of Barry CID said: "I want to stress to the public that this is a scam."

"You should never pass any banking information to anyone over the telephone – especially if you have received an unexpected call."

"Callers like this can be very plausible but legitimate organisations or banks will never ask you to provide this information."

"I advise people not to comply with contact from unexpected callers without first verifying the legitimacy of the call."

If people are concerned about a call, they can contact South Wales Police or ring 101.

*IT was the day of the hunt in Cowbridge on New Year's Day – the second time the town had been the starting point over the festive season, as big crowds had turned out for the Boxing Day event as well.*



## The Barry railway welcomes historic mode of transport



IMAGE by NICK WILCOCK

IN the run-up to Christmas, the Barry Tourist Railway offered a historic mode of transport.

Giving rides from the town to the Island was a 'rail-car' – a railway carriage which requires no train to pull it, because it has its own engine.



**A** WAAF officer who established and organised the cipher office at the heart of Churchill's wartime policy making, and who was born in Llantwit Major, died on November 26, aged 96.

Born in 1916, Joan Williams was educated at Malvern, becoming head girl in 1933.

She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) as an officer in 1939, but was then transferred to the WAAF, being posted to fighter command at Bentley Priory, Stanmore, during the Battle of Britain.

Eventually, she was sent to the Air Ministry in London, and asked to

recruit other WAAs for the Cabinet Office Cipher Officer (COCO).

As a Squadron Leader, 'Jo' Williams – as she then was – ran the office from 1942-1946, and was a vital cog in this war-making organisation, dealing with the passage of top secret signals between the venues of wartime conferences at Cairo, Washington, Tehran and elsewhere, and London.

At these conferences, the US 'Germany First' policy; the North African and south of France landing; the first date for the Normandy invasion, and relations with the Soviet Union were thrashed out.

Churchill's PPS later said: "The Prime Minister has never had better service in the handling of his signals."

She was awarded a mention in despatches

and awarded an OBE, marrying a Conservative candidate for Cardiff North in the 1950 election, David Llewellyn.

He retired from

Parliament in 1959 and the Llewellyns then moved to Berkshire, where she was still driving and attending fitness classes until two weeks before her death at 96.

I think she deserves a blue plaque in the Vale of Glamorgan, at Llantwit Major. **CHRISTOPHER SHORT, Barry.**

## GLAMORGAN GEM LETTERS extra

### REMEMBERING LADY JOAN LLEWELLYN OBE: Wartime Cabinet Cipher Officer

### 'Thanks to you, NSPCC's help for children continues'

**I** WOULD like to say a personal thank you to all of your readers in the Vale who have helped support the NSPCC throughout 2013.

Another year that has seen many high profile child abuse cases and shocking stories of cruelty so severe they've resulted in the deaths of innocent children – often at the hands of those who were supposed to protect them.

No-one can forget the faces of little Daniel Pelka, Hamzah Khan and Keanu Williams following their tragic deaths. This is a clear indication that while the shocking scale and effect of child abuse has moved centre stage in the public consciousness, still more needs to be done to prevent it from happening in the first place, which is why the NSPCC needs your readers' continued support.

Many primary school children are suffering abuse and neglect.

Our ground-breaking ChildLine Schools Service uses trained volunteers to talk to primary school children about abuse.

Through a series of assemblies and workshops, they will visit every primary school in every community in the UK once every two years to talk to children aged from nine to 11 about abuse, how to protect themselves, and where to get help if they need it – and they'll continue to visit each of these schools every two years.

Your support can help us to empower an entire generation and protect many thousands of children from the devastating effects of abuse. Anyone interested in volunteering should visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) for further information.

In Wales, we have two service centres helping local children and families. We've made significant strides to help children in the Vale of Glamorgan and beyond this year, and this is all thanks to people like you and your readers.

To make a donation text HOPE to 70744 to give £4 or visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk). **JO LEONARD, (SPCC community fundraising manager for the Vale).**

**Fibromyalgia group**  
THE next meeting of the Vale of Glamorgan Fibromyalgia Support Group is on Tuesday, January 14 at 11am-1pm. Call Gaynor for more details on 01446 733315.



# SANTAS ARE OFF TO THE RACES AT PETERSTON-SUPER-ELY FUN RUN

PHOTOGRAPHS  
by IAN DIXON

THE village of Peterston-super-Ely held its Christmas fun run around Wyndham Park. There were children's races, started by Father Martyn, and an 'owner and dog' race, followed by a wheelbarrow race.

A barbecue and drinks fortified the adults, and a great time was had by all, resulting in a substantial contribution of £410 to the village's playing field and play station fund.



There was great demand for the barbecue!



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# Christmas fun at the Sandville



THE children's Christmas party at Sandville Self Help Centre, Ton Kenfig, on Saturday, January 4, was attended by 23 children and 47 accompanying adults.

All the provisions were provided by the parents and grandparents, for which Sister Gwyneth Poacher paid special thanks.

She also thanked Gary Banks, the centre manager, for organising the party and games for the children, and all those who attended including the volunteers.

All the children with Sister Gwyneth Poacher and Gary Banks, centre manager.



The girls (and boy) in the backroom with Sister Gwyneth Poacher. (Photos by KEITH E MORGAN).



The children enjoying the spread provided by the parents and grandparents.

## Big Red's journey highlights stray dogs' situation...

**RIGHT:** Big Red in the Romania dog pound. Soon, he should be in Wales.

A canine behaviourist from Barry is bringing an abandoned dog to the UK from Eastern Europe, in a bid to highlight the suffering of strays in Romania.

'Big Red', as the dog is known, was effectively on 'Death Row' in a shelter until James Davies decided to organise a journey from the Continent to Wales.

James told The GEM: "I am picking him up from a place in Essex in mid-January. He was due to be euthanised. "A lot of people all over the world have been following his story."

Big Red's plight has



been publicised on Facebook. Funds have been raised to pay the vets' bills enabling him to make the trip.

James explained: "There are so many dogs out there that are suffering. Although he is aggressive, I am confident I can rehabilitate him."

Big Red is a retriever cross. James believes his story is symbolic and will highlight the issues

of dogs in Romania.

The country has a big problem with strays. In September, the Parliament approved measures for a cull in Bucharest where some dogs roam in packs. There have been reports of dogs being killed on the streets.

Animal rights groups insist the dogs should be spayed or neutered, rather than killed, to get the canine population under control.

James has promised to keep The GEM informed of Big Red's progress when he arrives in Wales.

## Two faces of nature...



SUNRISE.

LOCAL photographer Andrew Foyle captured the extremes of recent weather. On Saturday, January 4, Dunraven Bay was carpeted with rocks and boulders after



THE SCENE AT DUNRAVEN.

an overnight pounding from the waves. The next morning the sky over Stalling Down produced a beautiful sunrise.

## Organ donation campaign

A CAMPAIGN is being launched in support of soft opt-out organ donation in Wales.

New legislation comes into force on December 1 2015, aiming to achieve an rise in the number of organ donors with a new opt-out system for consent.

An individual will be deemed to be a donor by either registering a decision to opt in, or by doing nothing at all.

By doing nothing, it will be assumed there is no objection to being a donor, and an individual will be treated in the same way as if they had chosen to be a donor. If an individual doesn't want to be a donor, they can register a decision to opt-out.

Mark Drakeford AM, Welsh Government Health Minister, said: "In Wales, over 250 lives are 'on a clock' waiting for an organ donor, living in the hope that time does not run out for them and a donor is found.

"We are changing the law on organ donation in Wales to help people on the donor waiting list by increasing the number of organs available for transplant.

"The 'It's About Time' campaign aims to give clear information about the change in the law and what it means for all of us. It will feature everyday people who are waiting for transplants - except that there is something noticeably different about them - they have a digital clock, as part of their body, which is counting down their life.

"I hope when people see the campaign online or, over coming months on radio, newspapers and television, they will take a look at our website, think about their organ donation decision and discuss it with family and friends."

## Who wants to build what and where?

Wilkinson Group - 27 Llynfi Road, Maesteg - three internally illuminated fascia signs.  
Mr A Dykstra - 14 Heol Tre Dwr, Waterton, Bridgend - 40 per cent crown reduction, remove overhanging branches and dead wood.  
Mr Clive Thomas - Rear 106 Tudor Estate, Caerau, Maesteg - crown reduction of oak tree and remove stem of oak tree.

BCBC Parks - 12 Raphael Avenue, Brackla, Bridgend - reduce height of ash tree by 30 per cent, reshape and remove dead wood in crown.  
Mr Quang Truong - Woodgreen Fountain Road, Aberkenfig, Bridgend - demolish existing dwelling and construct replacement dwelling.

Mr Rolf Dahlmans - 6 Oaktree Drive, Porthcawl - construct glazed conservatory to rear.  
Mr M Rees - 19 Bryn Lliard, Litchard, Bridgend - demolish existing lean-to and conservatory and erect single storey rear extension.

Mr T R Griffiths - Land adjacent A4063 (opposite paper mills) Llangynwyd, Maesteg, - lambing shed.  
Mr A Gough - 26 Station Row, Pontyrryl, Bridgend - retention of wooden fence.

Mr Alan Evans - 34 Heol Y Bardd, Bridgend - proposed porch/shower room extension to include a WC, wash hand basin and shower.  
Terry Refell Ltd - Terry Refell Ltd, Church Street, Maesteg, - alteration to shop front to provide first floor window and ground floor shop fronts.

Mr Robert Clarke - 5 Bramble Close, Brackla, Bridgend - Conservatory and garage.  
Mr and Mrs Brace - 80 South Road, Porthcawl - two-storey extension to north, single-storey extension to south and two two-storey extensions to east elevations and porch.

Mr A Smith - 6 Taylor Road, Litchard, Bridgend - rear extension to provide new kitchen and living room.  
CAD Properties - Trade Secret, 6 Caroline Street, Bridgend - change of use from A1 to A2.

Mr Andrew J Ward - 7 Yawn Newydd, Heol Y Cyw, Bridgend - detached garage.  
Mr Robert Anthony - 30 The Esplanade, Porthcawl - rebuilding of rear of 30 The Esplanade and change of use from residential

to extension of bar/function room.  
Director of Children's Services - Tondy Primary School, Meadow Street, Aberkenfig, Bridgend - mobile classroom.  
Mr and Mrs Raikes - 13 Ysbryd Y Coed, Cavendish Park, Penyfa, Bridgend - extensions to side and rear - resub of P/13/582/FUL.

Mr Kingsley Davies - 28 Abergarw Road, Brynmynyn, Bridgend - provide vehicle crossover and driveway.  
CTIL and Telefonica UK Ltd - Land at Bridgend Road, Penyfa, Bridgend - install replacement 15m high monopole with ground based equipment.

Mr and Mrs DK and H Stenner - Land adjacent Tre Ethwil, Cefn Road, Cefn Cribbwr, Bridgend - demolition of disused hall and erection of one dwelling.  
Titanium Installations - K2 Gym, Main Avenue, Litchard Industrial Estate, Bridgend - retention of solar PV system on the existing roof.

Mr Robert Harry - 9 Bryn Henfaes, Broadlands, Bridgend - first floor bedroom over garage, porch/lobby to front and extend garage.  
Mr Walter Peyton - 7 Hafod Las, Pencoe, Bridgend - retention of conservatory porch addition to front elevation.

Mr J Evans - 8 Dan Y Coed, Blackmill, Bridgend - proposed summerhouse at end of rear garden.  
South Wales Contractors Ltd - 27 Village Farm Industrial Estate, Pyle - change of use of part of site from B2 (general industry) to contractor's yard (suis generis).

Mr A Smith - 6 Buarthau, Old Parish Road, Blackmill, Bridgend - single-storey side extension and front porch.  
CTIL and Vodafone Ltd - Land at Treoes Road, Coychurch, Bridgend - install a replacement 17.5m high dual user streetworks monopole with replacement ground base equipment.

CTIL - Rear of shopping centre, Gentle Way, Broadlands, Bridgend - replace 15m high mast with a new 15m high mast with six stacked antennas and additional ground-based cabinets.

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# LOOKING BACK ON PORTHCAWL'S SWIM THROUGH THE EYES OF A SULLY MAN



*The Christmas Morning Swim in Porthcawl is getting better and better known as time passes and it attracts swimmers from all over the UK, as well as Porthcawl expats who come home for Christmas and have a nostalgic dip in the balmy waters of the Bristol Channel.*

*Sully photographer Geoff Back of grb photography made the trip to Porthcawl, to see what all the fuss was about, and sent The GEM the two images above.*

## OVER 100 RUNNERS BRAVE THE WEATHER IN PORTHCAWL PARKRUN



*A different starting point for the Parkrun as the Porthcawl promenade was still littered with storm debris.*

**OVER 100 runners braved the rough high tide conditions last Saturday morning for the 40th Porthcawl Parkrun, starting on the town's seafront.**

The start and finish of the course had to be changed from the usual pier area, as the lower prom was impassable due to floodwater and debris. Volunteers marshalled the out and back course to Rest Bay, taking advantage of the closed West Drive road section as Bridgend County Borough Council workers were still clearing up from the overnight storm.

This was the first time that the organisers have had to revert to the contingency course, since the first run last April. Since then, 1,130 different runners, from 80 different clubs, of all ages and abilities, most-

ly locals but many travelling to enjoy the course's scenic nature. Although it's not flat, it is certainly rewarding in its views.

In the summer months, more than 160 have taken part in a scheme that is run at 230 cities and towns around the UK, where races are run simultaneously at 9am every Saturday morning.

The leading man was Gavin Gates and the leading woman was Julia Ridge, running 18:11 and 23:08 respectively. Like others, they use this event for training, fitness and being active while socialising with like-minded people.

Registration is free (on [www.parkrun.org](http://www.parkrun.org)) and the results indicate your times, progression, age grading, etc, while there are reward T-shirts for 50+ and 100+ finishes for adults and 10+ for under 14s.

STEVE BRACE

## Beach is battered as sea shows its awesome power

**IMAGES by SUE BAKER**

**THE GEM'S Sue Baker captured these images which illustrate how the force of nature has changed the character of the Llantwit Major beach area and meadow.**

The Vale Council closed the road to the beach over part of the weekend, and is assessing when best to start a clear-up.



## Primary school celebrates its 'glowing report'

**PUPILS and staff at West Park Primary in Porthcawl, are enjoying a successful start to the New Year after the school received a glowing report following its recent Estyn inspection.**

The inspectors have judged that staff and pupils at the school are ticking all the right boxes, having rated its overall performance as 'good', BCBC reported

this week.

Further 'good' ratings had been awarded to the school across a range of inspection categories, including learning experiences, teaching, leadership, improving quality, partnership working, and learning environment.

The future at the school was looking bright also, as the Estyn inspectors have specified that its strategic direction, leadership and self-evaluation, linked with its effective partnerships with parents and the local community, indicates its prospects for improvement are also 'good'.

Coun Huw David, cabinet member for children and young people, said: "West Park Primary should be really proud of this fantastic and well-deserved inspection report, which demonstrates the excellent standards being achieved at the school."

"I am particularly pleased that inspectors have highlighted the positive behaviour of pupils, the good progress they are making in their learning, and the strong voice they have developed through both the school council and 'eco warriors' schemes."

"I'd like to say well done to the teachers, governors, staff and children whose hard work has made this possible, and wish them all the best of luck as they take on the inspectors' recommendations and continue striving to improve."

The report also acknowledged the contribution teachers and support staff make to helping pupils to develop their skills and progress in their learning, as well as providing a high level of care, support and guid-

ance in the school.

Headteacher Ian Bird said: "West Park Primary School is very pleased and proud of the outcomes of its recent Estyn report. The report reflects the excellent effort and support that staff, pupils, parents and governors give to the school."

"We will continue to build on these good results and the recommendations in order to take the school forward in the future."

"One area of improvement that inspectors identified for the school was school attendance, but their report also noted that systems recently introduced to improve attendance at the school are already starting to have a positive impact."

"BCBC is currently working in partnership with schools, parents and carers to improve attendance in all schools across the county borough," said Coun David.

"While most of our pupils have exemplary school attendance records, some people may not realise that missing the odd day at school can soon start to add up."

"For example, if a pupil's overall attendance is 80 per cent during secondary school, they will have missed a whole year's worth of school by the time they sit their GCSEs."

"One of the easiest ways that we can help our children to be successful at school is by making sure they don't miss any lessons, which is why we will continue working hard with parents, carers and schools to continue improving attendance figures throughout the county borough."

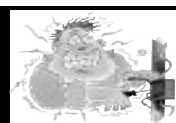
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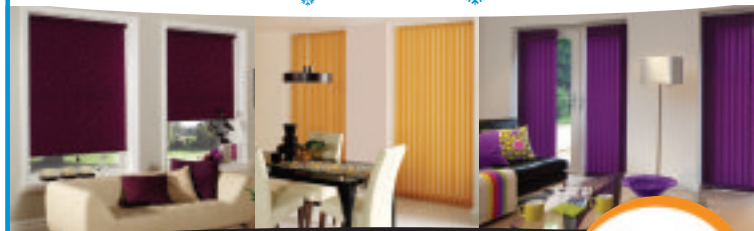
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## Situations Vacant



The Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Society Ltd invites applicants for the position of General Secretary.

A good communicator who is prepared to work from home is essential for this exciting role. This self motivated person will have the ability to work alone under pressure to target dates within the calendar year. The successful applicant would preferably have an understanding of agriculture and rural business, event management and basic IT skills.

The principal task is to facilitate the successful running of the annual Vale of Glamorgan Show.

Estimated work hours: 1000 hours per annum, but there are no set hours of work.

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For a job description or further information please contact David Harris 07834 703535.

To apply please forward your C.V. to Mr. David Harris, Show Director, 1 Mead Cottages, Penllyn, Cowbridge or email vale.show@btinternet.com.

Closing Date: 31st January, 2014.

## Public Notice

### LICENSING ACT 2003

To whom it may concern: I/We, The Leisure Department at The Vale of Glamorgan Council, do hereby give notice that they have applied to the Licensing Authority, Vale of Glamorgan Council for the grant of our premises licence at:

**Nell's Point Events Space** - within the new Nell's Point car park.

The application is to permit regulated entertainment such as: 1. Plays 2. Films 3. Live Music 4. Recorded Music 5. Performances of Dance 6. Street Entertainment

0900-2230hrs for all days of the week.

Any persons wishing to make representations to this application may do so by writing to Licensing Department, Vale of Glamorgan Council Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU not later than 28 days after the date of this notice.

Representations received after this date will not be considered. A copy of the Application can be viewed at the Civic Offices during normal office hours.

Date: 6th January 2014

## Family Notices

### JACK BAKER

Sadly, after fighting to the end, Jack died at home on New Years Day. Pat, Rhianedd, Carys and their families would like to thank all their friends for the fantastic support and love shown at this difficult time.

He will live in our hearts forever.

The funeral will be held at Coychurch Crematorium on Tuesday, 14th January at 3.45pm.

### WEATHERER

#### Thomas Clifford

#### (Chick)

Peacefully on January 2 at Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend in the presence of his family, Chick of Llandow, beloved husband of the late Rose, dearly loved father of Anita, dear father-in-law of John.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fommon, Funeral Thursday January 16, service 1.00pm, at Llandow Church, followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium Bridgend at 2.15pm. Family Flowers only to Funeral Home, donations if desired to British Heart Foundation, c/o Mr. J. W. James, 11 Fommon Road, Rhosce, CF62 3DZ.

### SKELTON

#### Lilian Emily

Suddenly on December 23 at UHW Cardiff, in her 91st year, Lilian of Rhosce, beloved wife of the late Herbert, dearly loved mother of Sheila and Stephen, mother-in-law of David and Natalie, much loved grandmother of Rhianon, Jessica and Alex, great-grandmother of Kieran.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fommon, Funeral Tuesday January 14, service 2.00pm at St. Peter's Church, Rhosce, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 3.00pm. Flowers may be sent to the Funeral Home.

### NEATHEY

#### Bryn

Peacefully at Llandough Hospital, Penarth, on Saturday 28th December 2013, Bryn aged 81 years, dearly loved husband of Margaret, loving father of Lynne, dear father-in-law of Jonathan and a devoted grandfather of Peter and David. Bryn, much loved and respected, will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

Funeral service to be held at St Peter's Church, Dinas Powys on Wednesday, 15th January 2014 at 2.00pm followed by interment at St Andrew's Cemetery, St Andrew's Major for immediate family only. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu, if desired, to Marie Curie Hospice may be sent directly to Marie Curie Hospice, Bridgeman Road, Penarth, CF64 3YR. All enquires to Green Willow Funerals, 21a Station Road, Dinas Powys, CF84 4DE. Tel (029) 2051 4627.

### TAYLOR

#### Peggy (Mary Alice)

Peacefully on December 29th at Baltimore House Care Home, Barry, Peggy, well known of Barry Island, John's Hot Bread Shop, Red Cross, Welsh Medium Education and Adult Learning. Devoted wife of the late Raymond, much loved Mum and Mum In Law of Susan and Terry, Gaynor and The Late John, Jane and David, Ricky and Kath, and Caroline (Atapini).

A Cherished Gran, Great Gran, Great Great Gran and Auntie. Loving Sister to Joan and Betty.

Resting in the private chapel of The Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry until her service at Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Street, Barry on Thursday, January 16th at 1pm, followed by cremation at Cardiff and Glamorgan Crematorium.

Family flowers only please. Donations if desired may be made to Holy Trinity Church in memory of Peggy. The family wish to thank all who were involved with Peggy's care. Further enquiries to Lyndsay Ellis @ The Vale Funeral Service 01446 407962.

### JERVIS

The family of the late Eluned Ann Jervis would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the kindness and support given to them during their recent bereavement.

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## Family Notices

### SAVORY Joan Eugenia

Joan Eugenia Savory, late of Cora Street, Barry. Passed away on Thursday January 1, 2014. Wife of the late Bob, mother of Janet and her late husband David, Robert and his wife Carole. Grandmother of Steven, Leah and Dan, great-grandmother of Calum and Eleanor.

Resting at AG Adams & Son Tynwydd Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry, until her funeral service at St John Baptist Church, Sully on Friday January 17 at 11.00am, followed by cremation at the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 12 noon.

Family flowers only, but donations in lieu of flowers to Tenovus (c/o AG Adams & Son, Barry).

### PIKE Veronica

Gently passed away 4 January 2014 at home, Veronica of Llantwit Major. Beloved wife of Cliff and dearly loved mother of Gerald and Barbara, grandmother to Alexandra and Lawrence and great grandmother to Leo.

"She was the voice of our hearts."

Funeral service in Our Lady & St Iltyds Catholic Church on Monday, 20 January 2014 at 12.30pm to which all friends are welcome. All enquiries WA Brown & Son, 01446 792489.

### WILLIAMS Frances Rita

Peacefully after a short illness on December 29 at UHW Cardiff, Rita of Barry and formerly of Rhoose, beloved wife of the late Mervyn, dearly loved Aunt of Christine, Stephen and Michael, dear friend to Gil and his family.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Ffnonon. Funeral Monday January 13, service 11.15am at St. David's Methodist Church, Colcot, Barry, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 12 noon. Family flowers only to Funeral Home. Donations if desired to Salvation Army or Diabetes U.K. c/o Mr. J. W. James, 11 Ffnonon Road, Rhoose, CF62 3DZ.

### SMITH Maureen (Mo)

Peacefully at Llandough Hospital on January 3, Mo of Phillipa Freeth Court, Barry. Dearly beloved wife of Mick, Mo will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.

Resting at AG Adams & Son Tynwydd Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry, until her funeral service in the chapel on Monday, January 20 at 11.00am, followed by cremation at the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry, at 12 noon. Family flowers only, but donations in lieu to Marie Curie Cancer Care, Holme Tower, Bridgeman Road, Penarth CF64 3YR.  
No black attire at Mo's request.

### MILSOM Kenneth

Val and family would like to say thank you for all the messages of sympathy, the flowers and kind donations sent on the sad loss of Ken. A special thank you to Mr James of Ffnonon and the Reverend Duncan Ballantyne for a kind and caring service.

### COPE Margaret Marylyn

Robert Cope, daughter Emma and son James, together with their families Neil Stewart, Angus and Rory, Fiona, Spencer and Thomas, wish to thank everyone for the tremendous support, sympathy and tributes extended following the death of Margaret Marylyn Cope (nee Gower) on 8th November 2013.

James and Fiona are pleased to announce the safe birth of a baby boy on 23rd December 2013.

**Griff Gower Cope.**

On this happier note we would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year for 2014.

### KENT Cyril

Of Wick, Vale of Glamorgan (formerly of the Bluebell Inn, St. Mellons, Cardiff), dear husband of Bunty, died peacefully on Saturday, 21st December 2013.

Funeral followed by burial at St James' Church, Wick on Friday, 10th January 2014 at 12 noon. Family flowers only, donations may be made to the RAF Benevolent Fund, c/o JR & MF David, Ewenny Road, St Brides Major, Vale of Glamorgan, CF32 0SB.

### JONES Gwyn

(Former Chief Superintendent) of Llantwit Major

After a short illness at the Princess of Wales Hospital, aged 90 years. Beloved husband of Betty, father of Wayne and Lynne, grandfather of Gareth, Catrin, Matthew, Darren and Emma.

Resting at WA Brown & Son, Llantwit Major until the funeral at 2pm on Friday, 17th January at St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major and then Coychurch Crematorium. After a long and happy life with Betty, a distinguished career and active retirement, he will be sadly missed, but never forgotten.

## Birthdays

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**  
**Philip Irwin**  
8th January 2014

Best wishes from  
all your friends  
at the GEM

**Happy 92nd Birthday**  
to a great Dad & Grandad

**JACK STEVENS**  
(formerly of Rhoose)  
on 10th January 2014

Lots of love  
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& Sylvia,  
Gerald & Family xxx

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Happy Birthday  
**Sarah Smith**  
on 1st January  
Love from  
Mum, Dad  
& family xxx

## Engagement Notice

**Congratulations**  
to our daughter  
**Danielle (Bam) Jones**  
& **Dean Richards**  
on the announcement  
of their engagement on  
Christmas day.  
Love & Best Wishes  
Mum & Dad, Lily, Helen  
& Steve, Lee & Leeanne  
and Laylah x x x

## Articles For Sale

ADVERTISE HERE £12 inc. VAT - box for 2 weeks. To take advantage of this offer simply either send in your description along with a cheque for the appropriate amount made payable to 'The Glamorgan GEM' at The GEM, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7EL or telephone us with your wording by 12 noon Tuesday. All major credit cards accepted. Tel 01446 774484. Advert must contain a residential land line telephone number. You may alter your advert as items are sold. Sorry no refunds are given.

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## Mair's dreams 'were fulfilled'

**M**AIR ANN REED, from Monkash, who has died peacefully, surrounded by her family, husband Dennis, and children Sian, Beti, Ceri, Owen, Sara, Alun and Elin, was a much-loved gran to her 25 grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Mair was formerly of New Mill Farm, Monkash, but in more recent years had lived at Bussiere Boffy in France.

She will be remembered by many as a renowned dairy farmer, together with Dennis milking up to 100 cows twice a day before moving to farm in France.

She will also be remembered for her warm welcome at her New Mill Farm Tea Room.

Cremation will take place in France, but a memorial service is being planned in the Vale in February. Details will be released once they become available.

Her husband and children said: "She lived for her family and fulfilled her dreams."



## School rallies to community with festive hampers



Some of the pupils who helped at the hamper-giving tea party.



**LLANTWIT MAJOR Comprehensive School** pupils and staff work hard throughout the year to encapsulate its mission statement of being a 'school for the 21st century at the heart of the community'.

The festive period was an excellent example of this, with the school running a number of events in the run-up to Christmas including the Christmas fayre and the school carol service.

On December 11, the school hosted its fifth annual senior citizens hamper-giving tea party. Pupils from all year groups spent the previous four weeks creating and filling 50 hampers, which were donated to senior citizens' groups from across the community.

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# PENCOED SECONDS EDGE OUT PYLE

**THE Bryn Glas ground had stood up to the recent deluge well, allowing both Pyle seconds and Pencoed seconds to adopt an expansive approach in this Mid Glamorgan League Division One match.**

Pencoed started well, a half break from centre Gareth Dyer putting them on the offensive, and driving play from props Sean Donovan and Anthony Morris set up good ruck ball with outside half Adam Williams making a clean break from the resultant possession. Unfortunately for Pencoed, their finishing was to let them down.

Williams then opened the scoring with a 30-metre penalty goal. Pencoed failed to gather a high kick shortly after the restart, and wing-threequarter Paine hacked through from 35 metres to score wide out.

Pencoed centre Rhys Watkins then put his side into the home 22 with a measured kick, and sustained pressure from the Pencoed pack saw hooker Dewi Jury drive over, only to be adjudged held up, to his disappointment.

Good driving play from Pencoed skipper Gary Money and Tom Swansbury set up a chance for Dean Coleman, the left wing shepherded out at the corner flag. The Pyle pack were beginning to assert themselves at the scrum, making life difficult for the Pencoed eight; however it was Pencoed who

were next on the scoresheet, Williams moving the ball from within his own 22 for Dyer to break and make ground down the right hand touchline for supporting full back Tom Cross to score in the corner, and Pencoed led 5-8 at the interval.

Pencoed increased their lead at the opening of the second half with promising young forward Swansbury powering away from 35 metres out, scattering home defenders to underline his potential.

Wood then kicked a penalty to signal the home side's best period of the match. Moving the ball wide Pyle brought matters level at 13-13, left wing Ansen showing good pace to finish wide out. Within a minute the home side had taken a 20-13 lead, Ansen getting his second try and Wood adding the extras.

Things looked ominous for the league leaders going into the final 10 minutes, somehow managing to waste a three to one overlap.

Pyle countered and only a desperate ankle tap tackle from flanker Ricky Evans saved what could have been a match winning home score.

Evans, now playing as emergency left wing, was put in space and, swerving inside the home cover, found the supporting Cross who forced his way over. Williams added the conversion and it was anyone's match at 20-20.

Pyle went for victory, and a vital tackle from Cross on his own line saved his side. To their credit Pencoed defended a home scrum, and with their team under pressure, the Pencoed support would have settled for the away draw. The Pencoed players thought otherwise, half backs Tom Davies and Williams deciding to move the ball from their own line!

A sweeping attack took play into the home half where once again their adventure got its reward, moving the ball from a set piece for Cross to split the Pyle midfield and avoid their desperate clutches to race in from 40 metres and dive over in triumph under the posts for his try hat-trick to seal a last gasp victory for his side.

Williams added the conversion, and then followed the final whistle much to the relief and joy of the Pencoed camp.

**Final score 27-20.**

TR

# Cowbridge RFC win in testing conditions

**WHILE progressing to round 4 in the SWALEC Bowl, Cowbridge badly needed a good performance against fourth placed Llandaff last Saturday, not having won a league game since the end of September.**

The corresponding game last season was a chastening affair for Cowbridge, losing 55-6.

On a muddy pitch Cowbridge started brightly, taking the game to Llandaff with some aggressive forward play and were soon rewarded with a penalty in front of the posts which No. 10 Alex Jones duly converted after just three minutes.

Already Cowbridge showed they were not overawed by the bigger Llandaff team and some enormous hits were going in.

One particular crunching tackle from centre Nick Davies led to a second Cowbridge penalty after six minutes, converted by Alex Jones.

Cowbridge were slightly let off the hook by Llandaff missing two kickable penalties but the aggressive Cowbridge pack with front row of Dave Breed, Luke Adams and Rob Howe, second rows Steve Birchenough and Euan McCracken and back row captain Luke Boys, Rhod Walker and Dan Jay kept Llandaff on the back foot and a Cowbridge penalty from a scrum was given a further 10 metres due to increasing Llandaff indiscretions and it was another three points.

There were further opportunities in the first half – a fine up and under from centre Carwyn

Morgan, followed by a crunching tackle by Rhod Walker, led to further Cowbridge pressure.

Veteran prop Dave Breed had to leave the field after being dumped on the ground by the smallest player on the pitch, to be replaced by Jon Phillips coming back after a long injury break – welcome back Jon.

There were further scoring opportunities before half time with Jamie Picton-Turberville and Carwyn Morgan both going close.

The second half was a ding-dong affair as the referee continued to regularly penalise both sides for various misdemeanours which seemed to frustrate Llandaff more than Cowbridge.

Cowbridge continued to stop Llandaff with excellent defence, double tackles knocking them back when they appeared to be gaining the ascendancy.

A punch on Alex Jones necessitated a blood replacement and captain Luke Boys moved to centre, Matt Logsdon came on as flanker and Carwyn Morgan moved to No.10.

With 20 minutes left, quick ruck ball was spun out from increasingly influential scrum half Tom James to Morgan at No 10 who transferred to Luke Boys on the burst, confounding the Llandaff defence as he sprinted over under the posts. Alex Jones was back on to convert the try.

Matt Logsdon stayed on as Luke Boys returned to the pack and the outstanding Rhod Walker took a well-deserved rest. Connor Boys replaced the equally outstanding Luke Adams

and continued in the same vein.

With 15 minutes to go Llandaff continued to attack but were repelled time and time again by the Bridge defence. Centres Nick Davies and Tom Larkin kept on with the big hits, wing Huw Moorcraft, who had a fine game, made a couple of powerful runs out of defence and the back row continued to defend stoutly, often turning defence into attack, the game ending 16-0 to Cowbridge.

Some may have had more mentions than others but this was truly a great team effort in difficult conditions. The pack gave their all for the full 80 minutes and the backs attacked and defended with great zeal throughout.

This win was badly needed and should augur well for the rest of the season – well done boys.

This Saturday, we return to the magic of the fourth round of the SWALEC Bowl against Nantfyllon at the Athletic Field. As it's a cup match, the kick off will be at 2pm to allow for extra time.

The following Saturday we travel to Llandaff North and then it's Nantymoel at home on January 25. The small matter of the Six Nations interferes with February, with just Tonyrefail at home on February 15 and Bryncethin away on February 22.

*A happy New Year to all.*

RV/RK

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## St Athan ladies end the year on a high!



### St Athan ladies' golf year ended on a high with the usual end of year events.

The presentation evening was a great success for all the ladies, particularly those who managed to carry away several of the prestigious trophies and wonderful prizes.

Erin Allison was the proud winner of not only the ladies championship but was also the junior champion. We hope to see this young lady going places in the golfing world.

The evening started with the presentation of cheques from Ros

Martin-Jones, the lady captain, and Hugh Williams, the club captain, to Tom Archer of the Wales Air Ambulance. This was the culmination of a year's fundraising for this worthwhile charity by the whole of the club.

The traditional Christmas eclectic lunch saw prizes presented to Liz Thomas, Jayne Williams and Maureen Anderson, together with a small gift to all the ladies.

After consuming a sumptuous buffet, the ladies were entertained by the committee giving a hilarious rendering of 'If I were not a golfer' with a Dalek, Postman Pat,

Dennis the Menace (complete with water pistol) and many other characters causing total chaos and tears of laughter!

The ladies' Christmas dinner in the Riverview restaurant in Cowbridge saw an endless stream of delicious Chinese cuisine arrive at the table, much laughter and cheerful banter ending what has been a happy and enjoyable year.

The new year starts with the 2014 lady captain, Jenny Young's drive in on January 11 and we all wish her a happy and successful year.

RMJ

## Chess team's narrow win

THE Barry Quarks Chess team were the last team to complete a match in 2013 when the visitors to the West End Club were the Cardiff Crowns.

Like the Quarks, the Crowns were surprisingly promoted from Division 3 last season but seem to have adapted better than both ourselves and the North Cardiff Cheetahs to life in the second division.

Ken Hannah, Sam White and Chris Green all earned victories with the ever dependable Kevin Gandy taking a draw to give us victory by a margin of 3.5 - 1.5.

We remain in ninth position but we are still in contact with the teams above us and are only 2.5 points from safety.

Normally, to avoid relegation you need to record six victories. To date we have only two so need to win four of our remaining nine matches. This is a tall order, bearing in mind that we are the lowest ranked team in the division.

The next two matches – the return fixture against the Crowns and a home match against the Cheetahs – are crucial if we are to avoid relegation.

The Barry Chess Club meets at 7.30pm each Monday at the West End Club, St. Nicholas Road, Barry CF62 6QY. The club is open to players of all standards; whether you are interested in playing competitive chess or just the occasional friendly games.

New players are very welcome to just turn up on the night but if you contact one of the club members through the website, we can explain what is happening on the night you have in mind, and arrange for someone to greet you on your arrival.

For more details visit our website: [barrychess-club.yolasite.com](http://barrychess-club.yolasite.com).

PJ

## Cefn RFC lose in poor conditions

Cefn RFC travelled away to Nantyffyllon, where the weather was wet and windy on a heavy sodden pitch.

From the starting whistle Cefn had to dig deep to stay with the Nantyffyllon forwards; time after time their pack dominated the possession and the Riders had to fight for any chance of the ball.

Cefn's defence throughout the game was exceptional, with the Curl brothers cutting the Nantyffyllon back line down. There were some good performances from debutants Stephen Gladwin, Dan Forester and Steve Parkhouse.

Cefn picked up their game just before the interval, scoring a cracking interception try by Rob Curl. This determination carried through to the second half, with the Riders sinking their teeth into everything, winning more of the 50/50 ball on the floor, with Luke Donne and Adam Ricketts working like terriers.

Cefn scored their second try, coming from the Riders' perseverance in the pack, finished off for

a well deserved try by Luke Donne. Nantyffyllon knew they were in a battle until the end, but the home team's experience paid off as they kept the pressure on and turned the screw, to win by 27-10.

ME

## Players required

RHOOSE FC under-10s (year-5) require players.

If you have a boy or girl keen to play please telephone Paul on 07701 009661; home games are played at Celtic Way, Rhosce, but you don't have to live in Rhosce to play for the team.

## Cowbridge darts

OVER the Christmas and New Year break there were no darts matches, so there are no results to report.

The present league standings remain: Llanharry (64 points), Edmondes B (54), Edmondes C (43), Hare and Hounds (37), Edmondes A (35), Highwayman Inn (34), Cross Inn (32), Farmers Arms (31), Old Post Ladies (14), The Star Inn (7).

The next matches are on Tuesday, January 14, when the Farmers Arms hosts the Cross Inn, the Star Inn hosts the Old Post Ladies, the Edmondes C hosts the Hare and Hounds, the Edmondes A hosts Llanharry and the Highwayman Inn hosts the Edmondes B.

For further information, e-mail Paul at [cowbridgedarts@gmail.com](mailto:cowbridgedarts@gmail.com). Up-to-date information can be found on the website: [www.darts.apsn.co.uk](http://www.darts.apsn.co.uk).

PJT



ABOVE: Tom Archer, Ros Martin-Jones and Hugh Williams.



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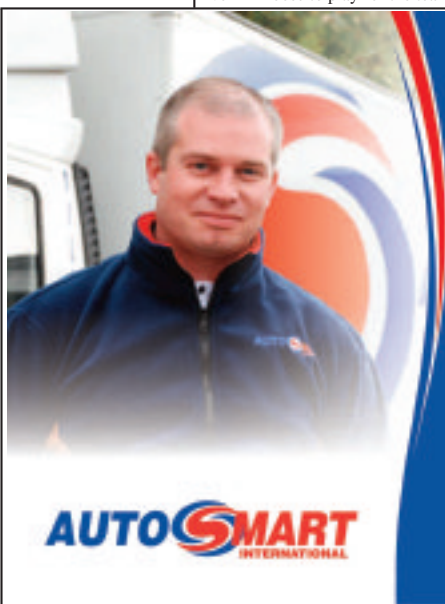


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## ANOTHER BOSS OR FREEDOM? WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

### GERAINT THOMAS,

41, Autosmart franchisee for Pontygridd.

Geraint Thomas had worked as a salesman, selling vehicle-cleaning products for 14 years. He always wondered whether the grass was greener elsewhere. When he saw the Autosmart franchise advertised, he realised that it was the perfect opportunity to be his own boss, to get out and about with work, meet new people and earn more money.

The Autosmart franchise was established in England in 1979, the first to provide professional products to the vehicle cleaning market via a network of 7.5 tonne vehicle showrooms. Over 30 years later they now have over 200 franchisees in countries as diverse as the UK, Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, Sweden and France.

Geraint's hard work and determination to succeed has meant that he's nearly trebled his sales and his income since starting in October 2005. Autosmart products are top quality", said Geraint. "All sorts of businesses use them - garages, car washes and car leasing companies to name a few".

Would Geraint recommend an Autosmart franchise? "Definitely! I'd make the same decision again. It's hard-work but the rewards are there - work hard, and you're bound to succeed."

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# GEM sport

## History's warning to Welsh rugby... 'HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND'

**S**HORTLY before his country was torn apart by a devastating Civil War that set brother against brother, future US President Abraham Lincoln took a lesson from scripture to famously warn - "A house divided against itself cannot stand" - a cautionary message the warring parties in Welsh rugby would also do well to heed.

For months, the widening dispute at the top of the national game between the four professional regions and the governing body, the WRU, has been followed with dismay and incredulity by the bemused rank and file who, after all, form the bulk of Welsh rugby.

The escalating war of words has grown ever more hostile - with threats, counter-threats and ultimatums seemingly heading inexorably to a complete schism that, we are told, could only be finally resolved in a court of law. Heaven forbid it should come to that!

In essence, the points at issue can be narrowed down to the declared intention of the four financially-troubled Welsh regions, which are partly funded by the WRU, to break away from Europe's officially-recognised Heineken Cup competition, which is broadcast by Sky TV.

Instead, they want to join a rival, unauthorised Rugby Champions Cup, initiated by the English Premiership clubs and their French equivalents, and underwritten by

### BACK PAGE COMMENT by Don John

broadcasters BT Sport - which they claim would "bring in £12million per year in three years to the Welsh game".

"We need to play in a meaningful, financially-viable competition", they've insisted. In the ensuing confusion, during which there has been an alarming Welsh player drain, they declined to renew their participation agreement with the Welsh Rugby Union, saying the Heineken Cup deal was "inferior".

Moreover, they declared they would not sign up when it was not clear what tournaments would be in place next year.

The four regions had also intimated that if there was no WRU approval by January 31 for them to join the Rugby Champions Cup, while continuing to play in the Pro12 (presumably with full Union funding) they could break away from WRU governance to join a new Anglo-Welsh league - or even seek to join an expanded Aviva Premiership (a move likely to be vehemently opposed by England's second-tier clubs).

The Welsh regions have accused the governing body of "failing miserably to ensure equal revenues with England and France" and of "vitriolic and derogatory attacks" after the WRU sent a letter to all 132 member clubs in Wales.

This pointed out that the regions were already funded through distribution of £9million in tournament income; plus £6.6million annually, direct from the WRU:

"That rose from £3.6million before 2009 when the participation agreement was signed, to reach £7million by September 2014, and £7.6million by the full term of the contract in 2019.

"As well as that agreed funding, the WRU spends £600,000 a year funding and staffing the regional rugby academies... That amounts to a potential £16million distribution for 2014," it stated.

"Wales is a small nation and we have to work within the reality of our situation, and allocate our limited funding accordingly. We cannot match French and English salary levels by the constant distribution of cash from within WRU resources...

"That volume of cash does not exist in Welsh rugby", the letter added.

The statement spelt out the WRU's firm contractual commitment to the European (Heineken) Cup and the Pro12 league, which was "in the best interests of rugby", and it "would not countenance leaving Scotland and Ireland isolated from meaningful tournaments".

That would inevitably lead to a "spirit of decline... and, consequently, demise of the Six Nations into a meaningless and unattractive sporting competition" - a view hotly denied by the four Welsh regions.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the complex arguments, also involving central contracts, it is nevertheless surprising that Welsh regions should see their financial sal-

vation lies on the other side of Offa's Dyke in alliance with English clubs, who in truth, can hardly be expected to have Welsh rugby's best interests at heart!

Yes, the financial problems they face are real enough - but the harsh truth is these are surely at least partly linked to their performance on the field of play, particularly in Europe - and also an abject failure to fulfil their wider role and responsibilities as Welsh REGIONS - rather than 'town super clubs' by another name - over a whole decade of professionalism.

It is a very sad indictment of the current situation in Welsh rugby, which has never lacked for individual talent at all levels of the game, that the current regions seem unable to take up the undoubted challenge of seeking more pro-active (and inclusive) ways to develop their resources at home, rather than look elsewhere.

The WRU belatedly announced this week that it would be offering the regions a revised participation agreement and as The GEM went to press, rugby followers were waiting, somewhat nervously, to see if at last a potentially fatal civil war had been averted.

In his famous 1858 speech, referred to at the outset of this article, Abraham Lincoln said: "I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided".

Welsh rugby continues to live in hope...

Do you have a view on the crisis?  
Write to: donjohn@tindlenews.co.uk

## Athletic earn historic friendly win over Cardiff

**WITH both sides having byes in the Swalec Cup, Cardiff invited Bridgend Athletic to play them at Cardiff Arms Park.**

The last time the sides met was 25 years ago when Cardiff, with Mark Ring excelling, won a cup tie by 38-16 on the same ground. Ring is now on the Cardiff coaching staff.

This time, if it is another 25 years before the sides meet again, the Athletic will hold the bragging rights after a historic well-deserved 26-22 victory over their Premiership rivals.

There was no indication of the drama to come as Cardiff twice stretched the Athletic defence in the first 10 minutes, opening up a 12-0 advantage with two tries from wing Jamie Loxton and a Jack Maynard conversion.

The Athletic were, however, enjoying territorial advantage thanks to the efforts of their mobile lightweight pack. They were rewarded in the 17th minute with a penalty kicked by outside half Steven Lewis.

The Athletic pack, led by flanker Sean Williams and his fellow back row colleagues Ben Howe and Dan Apee, were in Cardiff's faces all half, with locks Griff Davies and Darren Deguerre also very lively.

The front row of Matt Muir, Simon Mustoe and Rod Jones were excellent in tight and loose ball carrying and kept Cardiff pinned inside their own half for long periods.

The Athletic gave a debut to youth scrum half Jacob Williams and he showed great maturity, which bodes well for the future, and was certainly not fazed by the occasion.

It was completely against the run of play when Cardiff broke away from inside their own half and chipped ahead for wing Loxton to gather and complete his hat-trick and give

his side a 17-3 half timelead.

The Athletic have a high fitness level thanks to the main coaching team of John Apee, David Williams and Stuart Morris and few sides have outscored them in the second half of games. They came out of the blocks firing on all cylinders and for five minutes pinned the home side inside their own 22.

The pressure was rewarded with a second penalty goal for Steven Lewis. Another period of pressure inside the Cardiff 22 saw centre Lyndsey MacCausland charge down a Maynard clearance kick and win the race to touch down under the posts. Lewis converted to reduce the deficit to 17-13.

Within a minute, the Athletic took the lead. A high up and under from replacement scrum half Aled Thomas from inside his own half saw flanker Ben Howe harassing the Cardiff wing and gaining possession.

From the breakdown, the ball was transferred via Lewis and centres Ryan Owen and MacCausland to full back Lloyd Rogers, who entered the line and put wing Rhys Ward Jones over in the corner.

The Cardiff side were now rattled and a third Athletic score was imminent. A clever cross kick from Steven Lewis saw centre Ryan Owen gather and cross in the corner to stretch the Athletic lead to 23-17.

By now, the Athletic had used up their replacements, bringing on prop Huw Morris, hooker Dan Vella, flanker Callum McCleod and Josh White in the backs to replace the injured wing Dan Howells.

With 10 minutes remaining, Cardiff struck back when an assault on the Athletic try line saw the ball moved wide and lock Dan Partridge crossed in the corner to reduce the Athletic to a single point advantage at 23-22.

Cardiff were now piling on the pressure -

but it was the Athletic who scored when, from a break out, Cardiff infringed for Lewis to open up a four point advantage at 26-22.

The final five minutes was like the siege of the Alamo as Cardiff tried everything from five metre line out drives, bludgeoning runs straight at the Athletic defence and moving the ball out wide to spare their blushes.

Sheer team spirit and guts as every Athletic player tackled their hearts out to keep their line intact proved the deciding factor in this huge win for the Athletic. The second half had gone 23-5 to the Athletic.

This will be a huge morale booster for the club and will make other sides in the Championship take heed as the Athletic resume their league programme this Saturday against a rejuvenated Pontypool at Newbridge Fields.

**BRIDGEND ATHLETIC 2NDS 45  
BRIDGEND SPORTS 2NDS 7**  
Bridgend Athletic 2nd XV kept up their average of seven tries a game as they defeated local rivals Bridgend Sports 2nd XV in a friendly.

They have now won 10 out of 11 fixtures with 498 points for and 172 against, and a favourable 77-23 try advantage.

Wing William Williams extended his leading try tally to 13 with a brace, with single touchdowns for lock Dean Greenslade, flanker Liam Griffiths, scrum half Stuart Kenny, wing Andrew Tyler and replacement Josh Evans.

Outside half Tom Cole converted five of the tries. For the Sports, Matthew Davies touched down and Simon Partridge converted.

Aaron Mordecai was the Athletic's best forward and Scott Jones their best back.

AB



ABOVE: Lyndsey MacCausland crosses for Bridgend Athletic while BELOW: Rod Jones makes a break.  
PICTURES BY GLENN SPARKS

